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THE NEW

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The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

THE capture of Irun by the rebels last week was a serious blow to the Spanish Government. It loses them their main line of communication through France between the Catalan and the North-Western fronts, and it has cleared the way for the rebel advance along the Biscayan coast. San Sebastian is now hard pressed, and many women and children have been evacuated. A day or two ago it was reported that the Anarchists had made preparations for setting fire to the town at the last moment, as they did at Irun. It is difficult to see any sense in this sort of destruction, and there has been sharp dissension over it among the defenders. The Socialists and Basque Nationalists have opposed it, and according to the reports, have tried to negotiate a surrender on terms. On other fronts the Government claims some minor successes; but the insurgents also profess confidence, and General Franco is trying to intimidate Madrid by dropping leaflets from the air in which he boasts of his "international support." The spirit and the discipline of the Republican forces will be strengthened by the new Cabinet under Señor Largo Caballero, which includes the most prominent and trusted leaders of the Left-wing parties, excepting, of course, the Anarchists, who, however, promise it their support—for the duration of the war, at least. The formation of this Government, though it coincided with the loss of Irun, was not the result of that disaster; preparations for it had been made some time before. But the Caballero Government will be handicapped by the same fundamental weakness as its predecessor—a pitiable shortage of arms and ammunition, whilst the insurgents have lavish supplies.

The Policy of Non-Intervention

This grossly inequitable state of affairs is likely to be made still worse by the non-intervention policy. Everyone expects the embargo on supplies to the Spanish Government to be rigorously applied; there are grave doubts about the Fascist Powers being equally scrupulous in refusing to assist the rebels. One of them, Portugal, which has already given immense aid and comfort to the insurgent armies, has not yet come into the International Committee of supervision; the Committee held its first meeting in London on Wednesday with no representative of the Portuguese Government present. This recalcitrance could surely have been overcome long ago by pressure from Downing Street, and the failure of Downing Street to apply pressure is an ominous sign. But if the intention of the European States who have followed the lead of the French and British Governments is to see the "neutrality" policy carried out as honestly as possible, then Portugal must willy-nilly be brought into line. The most effective method would be to put Portugal as well as Spain under the embargo. It would be a drastic step to take; but the alternative—to leave the Portuguese

Government to go its own way—would simply make a barely defensible policy into a scandalous mockery.

Dictatorship and Mutiny in Portugal

The Portuguese dictatorship has natural affinities with the Spanish insurgents, and a natural fear of what might happen to it in the event of a "Red" triumph in Spain. But the fear is exaggerated; there is no real evidence of designs on the part of the Spanish Republicans, even those of the extreme Left, to deprive Portugal of her independence. No doubt a flourishing Soviet regime in Spain, if that ever came to be, would stimulate proletarian disaffection in Portugal. But at present the organisation, industrial and political, of the Portuguese workers is very weak, and the great mass of the peasantry are poverty-stricken and backward. The naval mutiny at Lisbon on Tuesday, which was apparently the work of Communists on a couple of warships, seems to have been a flash in the pan. The authorities had wind of it in advance and guns from the forts on the river banks soon crippled the ships. A few of the mutineers were killed or wounded, and the rest are in prison. The country is said to be calm, and the Government have adequate police and troops to keep it so. The main result of this desperate adventure will be, we suppose, to stiffen Portuguese public opinion (which, of course, is "bourgeois" and Fascist opinion) against Bolshevism over the frontier as well as at home.

Pressure in France

The Blum Government has survived another crisis and the sections of the Front Populaire remain faithful to their oath of unity. But the pressure is inevitably immense. Arms for the massacre of Spanish working people continue to pour into Spain; it needs no "Communist propaganda" to persuade working people in France that it will be their turn next if General Franco wins with the help of Italian, German and Portuguese Fascism. M. Jouhaux and the French Trade Union movement with him are as anxious as M. Thorez and the Communists to end the farce of non-intervention, but they are restrained by the obvious dangers of upsetting the Blum administration. The *Manchester Guardian* reveals that M. Blum's position has been rendered more difficult by pedantic notes from the British Government inquiring about Spaniards who had crossed to France and were allowed to re-cross into Spain at the very time that Lisbon, a capital singularly open to British influence, remains the effective centre and source of supply to the Spanish rebels. Ominous threats come from the rank and file that strikes may be renewed on a large scale as a method of protesting against one-sided non-intervention. The C.G.T.'s decision to stand by the Government strengthens M. Blum for the moment, but his difficulties are immense and it is deplorable that Britain should increase them.

The Congress of Honour

Hitler made the expected speech at the Nazi annual festival at Nuremberg. In addition to the customary flag-wagging and military pomp, a special side-show is this year provided by the Hitler Youth—the infants in arms whose education was to supply one of the key-notes of the Congress. Bolshevism, and the Jews as its supposed authors, came in for the usual diatribe of abuse. But more important in this year's "Congress of Honour" were Hitler's admission that the Nazi Government could not raise the deplorable standard of the average worker's life in Germany and an argument based on this for greater German self-sufficiency and the restitution of her colonies. A simple remedy would be to spend less on armaments. But the demand for colonies and ownership of raw materials is better propaganda. If restoring Germany's lost Empire would really give us peace we should differ from British Conservatives in being willing to consider any practical proposal for German mandates. But in fact Hitler's demand is vague; it is part of that general policy of dividing the rest of the world by blackmailing each potential adversary into agreement about Germany's demands upon other countries. "How much," as Low put it in his incomparable cartoon of Hitler *versus* the rest, "will each of you fellows give me not to kick you in the pants?" Unfortunately there are gullible people who do not see through this simple technique. They include in this country a curious assortment of individuals, amongst whom now are apparently Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Frank Buchman, who has justified our prophecy that his movement was Fascist by thanking "heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler who built a front line defence against the anti-Christ of Communism."

The Strong Hand in Palestine

The dispatch of an Army Division to Palestine, accompanied by a stern announcement from the Colonial Office, has naturally been acclaimed by the Jews. They had seen in the long "forbearance" of the British Government nothing but shameful and disastrous weakness. The Arabs are dismayed at finding that after all the strong hand is to be used against them. It is, no doubt, a regrettable necessity; order must be restored before grievances can be redressed. But, when the strong hand has done its work, will the Arab nationalists (who cannot any longer be dismissed as a handful of extreme malcontents) become any more amenable? They may, and we hope they will, treat the Royal Commission seriously; but what are the chances of their being satisfied with any proposals that the Commission is likely to make and the Mandatory Power to accept? The Mandate itself may not be called in question; the British Government will hold on to Palestine in the interests of the British Empire as well as in those of the Zionists. And the fundamental problem, which is becoming more and not less intractable as time goes on, is how to reconcile the interpretations that Jews and Arabs put on the Mandate. In this journal we have always argued for a co-operation between the two peoples that would issue in a united Palestinian nation, and we still cherish a remnant of hope of it. If that is not feasible, there is the alternative—a very disagreeable alternative, we think—of dividing the country into two and segregating Arabs and Jews.

Malta's New Constitution

The proclamation of the new constitution in Malta on September 2nd slipped by almost without comment. All traces of representative government have vanished. The Island reverts to the status of a Crown Colony, ruled by a Governor with a Legislative Council consisting of four ex-officio members and a number of nominees. In 1932 the British Government took occasion to prohibit the

teaching of Italian in the primary schools. At once the Maltese thought out a whole series of ingenious devices to evade and stultify the regulation. Within a little more than a year Whitehall replied by dismissing the ministers concerned and suspending the constitution again. "It cannot be too frequently emphasised," wrote the *Times*, "that the object of the Letters Patent of 1932 was not to attack Italian, which is the principal speech of the University and of the Law Courts, which has a strong traditional position in Malta, and remains one of the official languages of the Island. It was to defend English and Maltese against Italian encroachments and to improve the education, and therefore the well-being, of the masses." Nevertheless last week the Governor's first move under the new constitution was to enact ordinances reducing Italian to the position of a foreign language in the secondary schools and in the University, banishing it from the Law Courts, where Maltese and English are henceforth the only official languages, and raising by 50 per cent. the price of notorial deeds executed in Italian. It is quite clear that the Colonial Office intends at all costs to discourage the use of Italian in Malta. What is not clear is why it should consider it sufficiently important to merit so much trouble and insistence. Does it hope in this way to reduce the influence of the Italian-speaking Church in an almost completely Roman Catholic country? Or is it seriously afraid of Italian propaganda, Italian spies and Italian irredentism?

American Labour Splits

The American Federation of Labour has finally screwed up its courage to the point of expelling Mr. John L. Lewis, and with him at least a third of its total membership, including all the more progressive Unions. Thus the old guard reaffirms its continued faith in the traditional form of craft unionism, and its refusal to allow the rival principle of union by industry freedom to develop within its movement. Mr. Lewis and his friends will now presumably turn their Committee for Industrial Organisation, which the Federation leaders had ordered them to dissolve, into a rival Trade Union centre; and there will be war to the knife between the two factions in the labour world. The A.F. of L. will retain for the present its hold on the builders, the printers, and most of the older skilled crafts; while Mr. Lewis's prospects will depend on his success in organising such newer groups as the rubber, automobile and steel workers, which the Federation, with its craft union methods, has never effectively reached. If Mr. Lewis succeeds, his movement will outshine and probably in the end absorb the Federation. But he has a stiff fight ahead of him; the employers in the newer industries will fight Trade Unionism of any sort (except their own company unions) tooth and nail, and if Mr. Lewis gets beaten in these industries, his hold on the coal industry may even be shaken. He has with him, however, undoubtedly the best brains in the American Labour movement; and his breakaway from the old traditions of the A.F. of L. is the first real attempt to create a Trade Union movement capable of meeting the big trusts on equal terms. If the new body can establish itself industrially, it will probably have the further consequence before long of creating an American Labour Party as well, though for the time being Mr. Lewis is throwing his weight on the Roosevelt side.

The Bedwas Colliery Dispute

The threatened general stoppage of the South Wales miners on Monday was averted by a last minute change of mind by Sir Samuel Instone. After arguing all last week that he could have nothing to do with the proposal to take a ballot at Bedwas colliery between the "non-political" Union and the S.W.M.F., on the ground that he was pledged to the former body to employ only its members, he changed his attitude under pressure to the extent of agreeing to meet the S.W.M.F. leaders in order to see whether acceptable terms for a ballot could be devised. There appear, now, to be two questions at issue. Is the company to be free, if a ballot is held, to intimidate its employees by threatening them with losing their jobs if they vote the wrong way? And is the S.W.M.F. to be free to put its case before the men by means of propaganda? The company apparently demands that there shall be a "propaganda truce" from now until the ballot is over. That may be well enough, if it is made quite clear that the men are free to vote as they like without fear of subsequent victimisation. Negotiations on these points were temporarily suspended by an unexpected resumption of the stay-in strike, but this proved a short-lived affair and discussion begins again at the end of this week. We had hoped that by this time the colliery owners who still cling to the non-political Union would have realised that its continuance—and it could not last a day without their aid—so far from helping industrial peace, is a perpetual cause of friction. Perhaps, at any rate, the Bedwas affair is the beginning of the end of company unionism in South Wales.

The Means Test and the T.U.C.

Sir Walter Citrine had no difficulty in squashing the silly notion that the Trade Unions should boycott the Coronation ceremonies as a protest against the Means Test. Nor was he on less firm ground in arguing that it was quite impracticable to call a general strike against the new regulations of the Unemployment Assistance Board. It is plain enough that, while the Means Test and the U.A.B. are thoroughly and rightly unpopular, there is no such state of feeling against them as could possibly make such a movement a success. The Government, after its initial blunder, has played its cards well, first, by softening the opposition by means of the "dual system" now in force, and, secondly, by providing that the new scales, where they involve reductions in benefits, are to be brought into effect gradually, so that the full volume of criticism will not be concentrated on them at once. Hostility to the new scales will develop stage by stage, as they are gradually applied. In these circumstances, hunger marches on London, directed against the scales alone, would also be ineffective. But it does not follow that the Trade Unions can do no more than make verbal protests. Well organised marches and demonstrations from the depressed areas, officially supported and directed not against the Means Test alone, but against the entire policy of leaving these areas to decay almost unrelieved, are well worth consideration. The Trades Union Congress cannot afford to rest content with what is bound to seem a merely negative attitude.

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TRADE UNION POLICY

HITLER, Mussolini and Franco preside at the Trades Union Congress this week. With the battle between Fascism and Democracy being plainly fought out, in one desperate engagement after another, all over Europe, each national section of the working-class movement knows its future to be at stake each time the antagonists join issue. Every decision it takes about domestic policy is also a decision about international policy.

Some Trade Union leaders would no doubt like to think that they could divide the issues. They can agree upon general resolutions about foreign affairs and then pass on, nominally, to home issues. There is naturally agreement, as Mr. Findlay said in his presidential address, that in some form the forces of the Left must make common cause for the defence of democracy—and the word means a whole way of life, a system of ideas that we have inherited, not merely a form of government. It is easy to agree that unity is necessary against the destructive power of Fascism. But at that inconclusive point the argument is apt to peter out; some favour a definite pact among the forces of the Left, others hold that each Left-wing group must go its own way, and that they should merely act together occasionally as the chance offers without any agreed terms of co-operation. Mr. Findlay appears to be of this mind, and a large section of Trade Union and Labour Party opinion undoubtedly agrees with him. So presumably will the Labour Party Conference when it confronts the same issue at Edinburgh next month. For in the last resort the Trade Unions command the voting power in both assemblies.

It is easy to understand why the Trade Unions are disposed to move cautiously. They are highly suspicious —much more so since 1931—of "politicians" and "intellectuals"; and they are inclined to say that democracy will be best defended, as far as they are concerned, if instead of entering into any sort of makeshift alliances with other people, they attend strictly to their own responsible job of strengthening Trade Unionism and improving the working conditions of the employed and the maintenance conditions of the workless. They will express their sympathy with the struggling workers of other countries and, in foreign affairs, their hostility to a British "isolationist" policy that would give the Nazis a free hand against the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe generally. But in home affairs, where the danger is felt to be much less pressing, they are disposed themselves to be "isolationists," and to urge that the best results will be achieved if Trade Unionism is left to get on with its own job.

There is the essential difference between the home and the international "fronts" that on the home front, for the moment, the outlook is economically not too bad. There are half a million more people in employment than there were a year ago; and rearmament has given a very welcome impetus (welcome despite its cause) to certain sections of the heavy industries in which Trade Unionism is strong. The Trade Union leaders feel that, if they are given a free hand to exert a steady but moderate pressure for the next year or so, they can both regain a good deal of their lost membership and do at least something towards improving wages—even if most of the advance is very likely to be cancelled by a further rise in the cost of living.

As against this policy, they fear the efforts of alliances based on conceptions of political expediency. They are very reluctant to give any sort of recognition to the Communist minorities in the Trade Unions, chiefly perhaps because animosities bred of past denunciations are strong, but also because they fear that the Communists, despite their present professions of good behaviour, will so act, if they are given half a chance, as to upset the prospects of steady and orderly progress by orthodox Trade Union bargaining, and will in any case do their best to displace the existing leaders from their positions. On the other hand, alliance with Liberals or other "progressives" outside the Labour ranks seems to them to offer no prospect of increasing Trade Union strength, while it may well prove inconvenient if it leads to the Unions being asked to call off their industrial movements on political grounds.

These strong arguments are based on not very stable assumptions. If the British struggle could be fought out regardless of the outcome of the fiercer struggles in other countries, and if it were possible to look forward, with any degree of assurance, to a considerable period of British economic expansion of a reasonably secure and well-balanced sort, the right policy for the Unions would be to stick to the task of getting higher wages and improved working conditions, campaigning steadily against the household means test, and trusting thereby to consolidate behind the Labour Party that working majority which the experience of depression has failed to create.

But is either of these essential conditions realised as matters stand? Great Britain, internally, may be in no danger of an early Fascist triumph, even in characteristically British emasculated form, as long as war comes no nearer than Spain. But Spain is not really very far away, and a civil war in France, which is not unlikely to follow, will be even more difficult to "isolate." Indeed the war menace is now so deadly that calculations based on the assumption that world peace will be maintained have already lost most of their value. An anglicised "boiled-shirt" version of Fascism can come very rapidly indeed in this country, if it comes under cover of a war emergency. The fact that should be in the mind of every Labour or Trade Union speaker to-day is that Fascism is an international force and an international movement, and that if the Left cannot face it internationally and the once famous international solidarity of Labour means nothing, then Fascism, in some form, will win here as well as on the Continent.

Moreover, quite apart from the war danger, does Britain's economic future not depend on the international situation? Does it offer good prospects of a successful rebuilding of Trade Union strength along the traditional lines? For this to be true, it is necessary for the industrial revival to continue, as we may reasonably expect it to do for a few months yet. But can we, on the basis of present indications, expect it to continue much longer? If housing activity once begins to slacken off, it will take a great deal more rearmament even than is contemplated to-day to make up for its recession. If other countries are forced by economic necessity to decrease their purchases, if a new recession begins in America after the election, if the present Spanish troubles produce serious

internal repercussions in France, we in Great Britain may speedily find that our revival is not proof against such adverse forces. Nor must it be forgotten that, even if the improvement does last, the Trade Unions will have to spend a good deal of their energy in chasing wage-advances that no more than balance rising costs of living. Nor is it certain that in maintaining its traditional policy the Labour movement will retain the loyalty of the masses, let alone gather that increase of support that it needs if it is ever to form another government. For its present policy offers no prospect of relief to the disillusioned and miserable population of the depressed areas—which in South Wales, for instance, is now rapidly becoming Communist. The troublesome shouts from the extreme Left can easily be quieted at a conference by the persuasive voice of Sir Walter Citrine, but that voice does not penetrate into Durham or the Rhondda Valley. Violent counsels do not spring in this country from the philosophy of Marx. They are the result of long years of misery and gradual loss of faith in orthodox leadership.

Trade Unionism will for the moment go its traditional way. It can win sectional gains, since the situation is for the time being favourable to a campaign for higher wages in a large number of trades. That such a campaign should be actively pursued goes without saying. The question is whether it is by itself enough, or whether it should be merely part of a wider campaign to be fought by an alliance of all the Left forces on the home and international fronts. Sooner or later (and the later the worse) Labour leaders will be driven to a wider and more energetic policy. The Labour and Trade Union movements suffer, it is conventional to say, from a lack of leadership. But that is not because they lack men of ability. It is largely because their philosophy has not given them any guidance about meeting the ruthless challenge of international Fascism. In the rank and file to-day there is a new readiness to follow almost any bold and imaginative lead. But among the leaders of the Labour movement there has long been a suspicion of anyone who attempts to lead, and this suspicion was turned by the bitter experience of 1931 into something approaching a phobia. The Trade Union movement suffers from the paralysis which afflicts democrats who imagine that the old methods are adequate to new and menacing situations.

A MONTH IN SPAIN

ON entering Spain via Port Bou on August 5th, I was fortunate in being able to cross the frontier from Cerbère by the first train to leave France since the outbreak of the Insurrection. The previous day 1,500 workers from Toulouse had been permitted to walk through the tunnel to assist their Spanish comrades. On my train were a number of armed civil guards standing near the windows smoking cigarettes. The stations through which we travelled were patrolled by a few workers armed with rifles or sports guns. In the country the peasants were gathering in the harvest or doing other work in the fields. In the evening we reached Barcelona, and from the peaceful countryside I was hurled into a maelstrom of activity.

The streets were crowded with people and armed workers in blue overalls, which have now become the official uniform of the Workers' Militia. Cars and lorries were rushing at a mad pace along the streets; and every form of transport has been requisitioned for war purposes. All the vehicles bear the initials of the various political organisations and the Anarchist letters are predominant. Most of the hotels have been taken over by the Militia, but a number of rooms are allocated for the use of foreigners or visitors by the management, which is in the hands of a workers' committee. All the factories, workshops, power stations and transport were working normally and are under the control of workers' committees.

Although the old Government continues in existence in Catalonia, the real power rests in the hands of a Central Militia Committee representing the different political and Trade Union organisations. The Catalan Socialist Party, with which the Communists have amalgamated, had three members in the Catalan Government, but they were withdrawn on account of the Anarchists refusing to appoint any representatives. The Anarchists are, at the moment, the dominant force in Barcelona, and it is the first time that they have collaborated with the Socialists. The Catalan Socialist Party, however, is daily gaining in strength and popular support. There is also a lively Trotsky party in Barcelona, of which Señor Nin, an ex-Communist and formerly secretary to Trotsky, is the leader.

On the surface a solid united front is being observed by the various parties in face of the common enemy, but there is a good deal of friction and jealousy beneath. I am assured, however, that the united front will continue after the rebellion has been suppressed. That remains to be seen. The Anarchists are ruthless in their methods and the leaders are unable to control all the actions of their members. The gun is used much too freely to settle an argument or an opponent. Within the ranks of the Anarchists there are some fine types of men, and also, undoubtedly, some criminal elements. It is only fair to say, however, that they were the first to turn out on to the streets of Barcelona to fight the insurrectionists. Of all the parties they appeared to be the best organised, and their headquarters, in a huge building, seemed to run as smoothly as a first-class City office. Every day processions of the various political parties pass along the streets calling out their different party slogans, each trying to gain support for their particular brand, the most demonstrative being the P.O.U.M. (Trotskyist movement) and the Anarchists.

Recruits by the thousand are being hastily trained and equipped and sent off to the front. There is a spirit of enthusiasm and determination that I have not seen equalled even in Russia. At the beginning of the insurrection the workers literally fought with bare fists in many cases, but now matters are much more equalised. Many officers of the regular army are fighting on the side of the workers. The most determined on the rebel side are the Carlists, the Clericals and the Fascists. The soldiers are rarely thrown into the battle. They have proved too unreliable. The slowness in getting a decisive result is due to a large extent to the reluctance to sacrifice men in attacking positions where the enemy is surrounded, or to bombard towns where there is a civil population. The rebels have no such scruples.

In a tour lasting three days I visited all the main sectors of the Saragossa front. The most advanced post was the small town of Pina, which had changed hands several times. This sector is under the command of the famous Anarchist, Duruty, who spends all his time at the front and has gained a great reputation for dash and daring. On account of his recklessness in the sacrifice of men his power has been somewhat curtailed. In an interview with him he declared that the outside press did not understand the Anarchist policy. He dramatically pointed to the black-red flag flying over his headquarters and said that it symbolised their principles; red stood for syndicalism and black for anarchism, which they intended to bring into being throughout Spain. My impressions of Duruty were that of fearlessness and ruthlessness with a large dose of egotism.

The other fronts I visited were Sietamo (two or three miles from Huesca), Barbastro, Cervera, Bujaralos and Lerida. In all the towns and villages there was great enthusiasm, on the part of both the workers and the peasants. My impressions of the various fronts are somewhat mixed—organisation and discipline are more or less lax and equipment is lacking. It is neither orthodox military warfare nor is it guerilla fighting. There

are zones of fighting areas and large tracts of no-man's land. Each political party recruits and organises fighting groups and these are sent to the front as groups and fight as such. Usually a regular army officer is in command. Although discipline may be lax, the officers not daring to exact strict military control, the Militia are keen and brave fighters. It must not be forgotten that when the insurrection began the Government were left without an army and everything has had to be improvised at a moment's notice. And added to their difficulties was the fact that guns and munitions were not manufactured in complete units in one centre, but were produced in parts, in different towns, some of which were in the hands of the rebels. Considering all these difficulties it is surprising that the Republican forces have done so well. When I left, the workers were already producing aeroplanes at the rate of several per day.

So far no definite agricultural policy has emerged either from the Catalonian Government or from the joint committee of the workers. In the Aragon villages each party is pursuing a different line. The small peasants, who formerly held their holdings from the big landlords on the basis of giving half of their produce to the owner, are now mostly released from this burden. Others have had their taxation reduced by one-half. The Anarchists attempt to turn the village into a collective commune. The Socialists and Communists give extra land to the small peasants, and what remains they organise into a village collective farm. As the big farmers and landowners have disappeared there is usually a good deal of land to spare. While the civil war continues all food is requisitioned and receipts are given for all goods supplied.

On my way to Madrid I stepped off for a day in Valencia. Here the garrison did not surrender until fourteen days after the insurrection. They had been confined to barracks (except those who wanted to leave), and it was not until the workers threatened to attack that they surrendered. It appeared that Señor Barrios, who had been sent by the Madrid Government, attempted some sort of intrigue to negotiate terms with the rebels. This was scotched by the workers and his recall was achieved. The predominant force in Valencia is the Socialists and Communists.

In Madrid affairs were very different. Here, the Anarchists had very little power and held few positions of responsibility. The Government held only nominal authority, but all executive actions were done in its name. The drive behind these actions was supplied by the workers and their leaders. There were then no Socialists nor workers in the Government and consequently the pressure of the workers came from outside. The Government occupied all the administrative buildings and controlled the staffs and telephones. Yet they had to be constantly kicked into actions they took, and it was a relief to hear that Caballero and Prieto had settled their differences and were uniting to form a stronger administration.

The absence of nearly all the accredited representatives at the various legations in Madrid considerably weakened the prestige of the Government. The most experienced and reliable foreign correspondents were vehement about the fact that the British Ambassador had not returned to Madrid. They contended that he should have returned or have sent someone else to take his place. They believed that many lives could have been saved. Fortunately, a Chargé d'Affaires —Mr. Ogilvie Forbes—arrived in Madrid two days before I got there. It was with some difficulty that while I was there interviews were arranged between him and Señor del Vayo and Señor Caballero, the new Prime Minister. Largo Caballero is a remarkable man and extremely popular. One day I had the privilege of going with him and Alvarez del Vayo to the Guadarrama front. As soon as the Militia heard and saw Caballero they almost mobbed him in their enthusiasm and delight. In the interview that he had with Mr. Forbes, in which the latter complained of certain excesses that were being committed, he declined all responsibility for the Government. "If I were in control all these excesses would cease," he said. When I impertinently asked why he did not take over the Government, he replied that he was not prepared to embark on a *coup d'état*. But now Madrid has at last a strong Government which should make a great deal of difference in the conduct of the war. In answer to one of my questions as to what would happen after the Fascists are defeated, Señor Giral, the then Prime Minister, said that the Government would go back to the *status quo*, and call the Cortes together again and allow them to decide. This appeared to me to be so unrealistic that I refrained from asking further questions.

One of the disconcerting things in Madrid was that the Anarchists had 5,000 Mauser rifles which they refused to give up, and also declined to go to the front. One would have thought these would be better employed elsewhere. An amusing incident happened while I was there; a German bomber landed at the aerodrome laden with hospital appliances, and in the plane was an Italian paper describing in full detail the capture of Madrid by the rebels.

From all I saw and heard I believe the Republican forces could defeat their enemies provided that the constant help that the rebels receive from outside could be effectively stopped.

F. L. KERRAN

A BRUSSELS DIARY

THE Greeks used the word *αἰδώς* to describe the sense of shame felt at any spectacle of public humiliation. I know of no English word, unless it be "shame-making," to convey the effect on me of the First World Peace Congress at Brussels. It was not that the hastily-improvised organisation was inadequate; the organisers had performed wonders in moving the Conference almost at the last minute from Geneva to Brussels, and seeing that a thousand or two unexpected delegates turned up it was not surprising that there should have been an awful scrimmage over the hotel accommodation. The trouble went much deeper than that. People would even have got over the shortage of lavatories if the Congress itself had meant anything. As it was they walked about in increasing gloom; they wore their badges R.U.P., the *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix*, with less and less confidence and asked you whether the letters were not a misprint for R.I.P. And ought not the Congress to have been called "the Last" instead of the "First" World Peace Conference? That was why I felt ashamed. People who had saved up a few pounds to come and learn how they could work for peace left, I think, with less hope and less faith than they had when they arrived.

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For this Congress came at least ten years too late. Ten years ago a peace congress of common people from all over the world—for the Congress was really world-wide—might have been the beginning of a League of Peoples which could have superseded the League of Nations. As it was, the proceedings only recalled H. W. Nevinson's brilliant phrase about "the stage army of the good." And this was the more pathetic because the delegates included a host of faces not known at Geneva, working-class people who had come often in spite of official discouragement, in spite of the coolness of Transport House and the League of Nations Union to any congress which was to include Left-wing and Communists as well as professional pacifists. In some factories working men had clubbed together to send delegates. There they were, the cannon fodder of the next war, waiting for leadership and knowing, as their cheers showed when they had the chance, that the next war had something to do with Fascism and with Spain. But neither Fascism nor Spain could be mentioned. An American organisation "against War and Fascism" had to suppress its too provocative title. Twice the rank and file tried to express its feelings. On the first night when a Spanish delegate appeared, a host of fists went up and shouts began "*Les Avions pour l'Espagne*." The demonstrators were at once informed that this was an entirely non-political congress. It was about peace, not about politics, not about the actual war that is now raging, but about the prevention of some war

that might happen some time. A strange division, but one maintained throughout the Congress. At the final demonstration the Spaniards again appeared, and "Pasionnaria," the eloquent and beautiful woman deputy from Oviedo, who had evoked ardent sympathy for her cause in France, arrived on the platform. Shouts of "*Les Espagnols au Micro*" broke out spontaneously. It was not Lord Cecil, but Marcel Cachin, the veteran French Communist, who checked this demonstration. They must not introduce politics. "Pasionnaria" remained silent. Marcel Cachin pronounced an eloquent and unexceptionable speech on liberty, democracy and peace. "Admirable discipline among the Communists," I heard League of Nations Union organisers remark. A promise had been given to the Belgian Government that there should be no political demonstration. Yes, the Communists behaved admirably. They kept their word. But what is the use of promising not to discuss realities? What is the use of a "united front" if the price is worn-out platitudes and the murder of honesty, enthusiasm and faith?

* * *

Are these words too strong? I do not think so. Of course there were good discussions in some of the Commissions. The Trade Union Commission was lively. The Air Commission contained air aces like Scott and had a scheme on the table for internationalising aviation which might have saved Europe if Governments had taken the subject seriously during the Disarmament Conference. The Psychology Commission was to be congratulated on killing a resolution urged by one of its members about the importance of cultivating "a sense of realities." I went into the main Co-ordinating Commission and heard an amiable gentleman explaining that the value of such a Congress was that it helped "us all to appreciate each other's difficulties and points of view." How many times, I asked myself, looking at Lord Cecil's superb profile in the chair, and at Philip Noel Baker at his side, drafting, translating, writing on, dauntless and always optimistic—how many times have they heard that sentiment at Conferences in the last ten years? The final plenary session surpassed even my worst fears. How perfectly these phrases about democracy and the League trip off Mrs. Corbett Ashby's tongue! She will be found, I'm sure, courageously addressing a meeting on collective security while the bombs are destroying French and British towns as they are, even while I listen to her, destroying Spanish towns. And so they went on, as if unconscious of Franco's ghost hovering over their banquet of phrases. There is to be a "Peace Day," a "Peace Fair," and a "Peace Penny," (or is it really a sou?), and a new international organisation, and we are in favour of nationalising the manufacture of arms (the Fascists have already nationalised theirs), and of an international radio station at Geneva, and the agrarians and the ex-servicemen all carried quite excellent resolutions about co-operation, and there was even a dramatic movement when a Jew and an Arab from Palestine came forward and publicly blessed each other. And of course there was a Peace Oath too. But the oath, like everything else, carefully avoids the only question that matters—whether pacifists fight against aggressors or whether they do not. If they do not mean to fight then they should all have been at Dick Sheppard's meeting next day (George Lansbury, Aldous Huxley, Captain Mumford and others spoke); if they do mean to fight for collective security then the only subject to discuss was *Les Avions pour L'Espagne*, for their cause and their last chance is even now to-day disappearing just because the Spanish Government has no airplanes to defend itself against Italian pilots, German junkers and Moorish soldiers.

* * *

Talk with people straight from Spain convinced me that the Spanish Government wants arms, not sympathy. They have whole battalions whom they cannot arm, while Franco has more arms than men to use them. Other conversations brought home to me that the most important of all Fascist triumphs has scarcely yet been noticed in England. The Catholic Church with its universal tradition seemed for a long time the most serious opponent of Hitler. But to-day Catholicism and Fascism are plotting hand-in-hand. I have come across the tracks of those who helped to arrange General Franco's coup among reactionary Catholics in England, and you have only to look at the Catholic press or at the *Daily Mail*, now the champion of Catholic Christendom, to see how successful their propaganda has been. Last Sunday a pastoral letter, in effect accepting Hitler as the world's champion against Bolshevism, was read in German churches, and a similar letter was read in Polish churches. Hitler has now presumably no more to fear from the Pope than Mussolini has. Spain, after all, was Rome's great stronghold: and the Vatican, I think, was behind General Franco from the beginning. Cardinal Pacelli, Foreign Secretary to the Vatican and former Nuncio at Berlin, is, I am told, now making a tour of European capitals.

* * *

A great storm broke out as I left the Exhibition building, where the Congress was held. The fine words that once revolutionised the world—liberty, equality and brotherhood—and which have been in some form or other the inspiration of all human striving in the Western world for the last two centuries, still resounded in my ears. Peace, Democracy, Progress—yes, they are "myths," no doubt, but myths that can be realised by human will and which men will still cherish and revive, in some new form, when the pagan myths of national hegemony and racial domination have again brought us to destruction. As I realised this in the driving rain waiting for a taxi, I thought I saw for the moment a mighty gust of wind take these huge buildings and the rolling phrases with them and whirl them up to heaven like so many leaves of paper, like so many banknotes in René Clair's film of the catastrophe of capitalism. There, flying up to the clouds, were the Exhibition statues of Labour, Peace and Industry; there were Lord Cecil, dignified as ever in his Assumption, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, saying something about the sanctity of treaties, Maxwell Garnett asking if we had paid enough attention to Article XIX of the Covenant, and behind them the entire gesticulating Conference and the map of Europe, rolled up in a strange guise, and last of all, old John Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Jefferson and Jeremy Bentham. Returning to earth, I caught the Ostend boat. The wind had not subsided and the only vision left was the huddled deck of sick humanity.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. R. M. Campbell.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

A meeting of Cabinet Ministers was held at 10 Downing Street to-day to discuss the foreign situation.

Among those who were not present were: Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Eden, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Lord Hailsham, Sir Samuel Hoare, Lord Halifax, Mr. Duff Cooper, and Sir Godfrey Collins.—*Evening News.*

And one hears that the Duke of Alba's magnificent palace in Madrid, filled with priceless treasures, is occupied by the families of Government troops. With shudders we turn away, and, since we cannot help, we try to forget.—*Sunday Express* correspondent in Biarritz.

Mr. Penrose was converted at the age of 13 . . . In July, 1934 [he] was offered and accepted the living of Tintwistle . . . No easy task awaited him there, as dances and theatricals were the order of the day. He took a definite stand against these things from the start, and so richly has God blessed the work that among the keenest Christians are to be found some of the former actors and actresses from the Dramatic Society which he disbanded.—*Churchman's Magazine.*

The real reason for advertising is not to help someone to sell something, but to help you to buy what you want.—Advt. in *Evening Standard.*

The Rev. A. S. Cripps, whose Muse has been associated with Mashonaland and Rhodesia, with a poet's eye reading in their savagery the old songs of Hellas, has long been regarded as a major English as well as African poet.—*Poetry Review.*

While South Wales Miners' Federation last night sent out notices to all lodges to arrange for a general pit strike affecting 120,000 men on Monday, stay-in strikers at Treherbert, Glamorgan, completed more than 180 hours in the mine. To-day their time below ground will be a British record—which previously stood at 197 hours.—*Daily Mirror.*

A view of the Cathedral, while dressing, is the unusual privilege of those staying at The Royal Clarence, Exeter.—Advt. in *Daily Telegraph.*

The new stamps have just been issued and I wonder if I am in a minority in not liking them.

It does seem a pity that we should, as we surely are doing, lose our individuality even in a thing as trifling as a new issue of stamps. Somehow there is a Continental flavour (or is it super-modernism?) about them, as there is of the new bus signs in London.—Letter in *Daily Sketch.*

SECOND-RATE

A LADY has written to the *Times* to confess that when she first saw the new King Edward postage stamp, she sighed—sighed from a sad heart. "But why sigh?" she ultimately asked herself. "The stamp is really a remarkable and priceless historical document. It is a complete revelation of an age of which someone—who, like myself, has firmly adopted the mantle of the centenarian—said to me: 'Everything from beef to bookbinding is second-rate, and nobody realises it.'"

I always—at least, mostly—like to see the age indicted. I cannot agree with those people who dismiss all such indictments as the maunderings of the elderly. They tell us that every age in history has been the subject of the same laments—that there has never been a time when, according to the elderly, the world has not been going to the dogs. This does not seem to me to dispose of the indictment of an individual age. It is true that the world has always been said to be going to the dogs, but it is also true that there have been ages in which the world was not only said to be going to the dogs, but was actually going to the dogs. I could name such an age if I were not sure that someone who knows more history than I would contradict me, and prove that that particular age was one of the nearly golden ages of history. Everyone, however, will probably agree that there have been ages of decadence as well as ages of progress, and the present age cannot run away from the lady's indictment on the plea that equally severe things have been said about other ages which are now generally considered to have been glorious. On the contrary, we must examine carefully the evidence for and against that bitter and mournful saying: "Everything from beef to bookbinding is second-rate and nobody realises it."

During the past few weeks there have been some stirring letters in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION in which eminent men have inveighed against the second-rateness of the food provided in most English hotels. It would have been no answer to these complaints to say that English cookery has been the subject of complaint for many generations or even to say that the food in English hotels is better to-day than it was twenty or thirty years ago. The sufferer who is eating a bad lunch in a hotel in 1936 is not consoled by the reflection that he would probably have been given a still worse lunch if he had visited the hotel in 1906. Nor does the fact that his ancestors were perpetually groaning about food suggest to him that his own groans may be unjustified. He is concerned only with his own plight and rises in the mood to launch from the table an indictment of an age in which the food in English hotels is "second-rate and nobody realises it."

For my own part, I believe that his indictment is sound; and I believe that the most melancholy part of the thing is that "nobody realises" how second-rate the food is. "Nobody" is a slight exaggeration; but I have often been struck by the relish with which Englishmen enjoy their meals in bad hotels and restaurants. This, it may be, is a piece of luck for them, since they feel none of the miseries of the gourmet as he eyes two soapy potatoes and a triangle of boiled cabbage by the side of a slice of insipid beef. If it is almost impossible to obtain good food, may it not be an excellent thing that human beings like bad food just as well? The gourmets are in a small minority. Why should the others be made suffer the pangs of disillusion and encouraged to have palates that would spurn the food they now enjoy? The answer to this question is, I suppose, that in food, as in the arts, the pleasure of liking the first-rate is both finer and profounder than the pleasure of liking the second-rate. This is a fact that cannot be proved, but it is a dogma widely held among the fastidious. There are fastidious lovers of literature, who groan in spirit if they discover a boy or girl thoroughly enjoying a second-rate book. I remember, when I was a boy, how deeply horrified one of the most literary of my schoolmasters was when he discovered that I was an enthusiastic admirer of Marie Corelli's *Barabbas.* To him I was a brand to be plucked from the burning. It never struck him that I had the right to be happy in the company of such authors as Hall Caine and Marie Corelli. He was prepared to wreck this happiness of mine, confidently believing, no doubt, that I should be a great deal happier if reading second-rate books made me unhappy. Nearly all fastidious people are ready—even eager—in much the same way to wreck the happiness of their less fastidious fellow-creatures. This is an inevitable result of having a religious faith in the first-rate.

In the matter of books, pictures and music there may be something to be said for this destruction of happiness. The boy who loses his taste for second-rate books has no difficulty in finding first-rate books to take their place. First-rate music is as easily obtainable as second-rate music. What about food, however? If the Englishman who is frequently compelled to lunch and dine in hotels and restaurants loses his enjoyment of second-rate food, where is he to find first-rate food to satisfy his newly acquired taste? There are, as everyone knows, excellent hotels and restaurants in England, but the ordinary man has not always time to look for one of them at mealtimes. When motoring especially, he has often to take his chance with an unknown hotel that he happens to be passing about one o'clock. In such circumstances, if he still can enjoy second-rate food, he will be perfectly happy. If, on the contrary, he has a good enough palate to realise that the food is second-rate he will be perfectly miserable. He will return to his motor car, soured for the day. His friends and acquaintances will suffer from the embittered view of life that is the result of a man of educated palate's being given a vile meal. If Englishmen are trained to have fastidious palates, it seems to me there is a risk of their being turned from a race of cheerful, tolerant human beings into a race of infuriated and intolerant men longing to persecute chefs and hotel-proprietors. Is it not wise to pause before taking such a risk?

It may be replied that, in such circumstances, the present generation would undoubtedly suffer—that the ordinary man, having realised the difference between second-rate and first-rate food, would again and again endure the pangs of purgatory when he sat down to a meal in a hotel—but that all this suffering is necessary for the sake of the next generation. If the present generation, realising how bad the food is, raises enough rows in hotels to compel the proprietors to provide really good food, then, it may be argued, England will become, in the next generation, a gastronomical demi-Paradise. The ordinary Englishman, however, well as he wishes to the next generation, gives little thought to it at mealtimes. All the

forces of his being are concentrated on one thing—the food before him—and he wants to enjoy it. Seated before a well-filled plate, he lives in a beautiful unaesthetic dream. You will shatter that dream at your peril.

At the same time, something must be done to combat the second-rateness of the world in which we live. Most things around us are in an advanced stage of second-rateness—not only food in hotels, but politics, for example, psychology, and even the arts. It behoves public-spirited men to do something about it. I have, myself, only a moderate share of public spirit, but I like to see people—hotel chefs and others—doing first-rate work, and their too-frequent second-rate work distresses me. I do not see why we should acquiesce in an epidemic of second-rateness as though it were something predestined. Consider, for instance, how much unnecessary second-rateness is to be found in garages and wireless shops. How often one has left one's car in a garage to be greased and prepared for a long journey only to discover after a few miles that it has been left short of gear-oil and that smoke is coming up through the floor, or that the hub of the near front wheel is smoking because of a maladjusted brake, or that some other accident due to the second-rateness of the mechanic's work has happened! It seems to me that the war on second-rateness might well begin with the introduction of tests for garage hands as well as for drivers of motor vehicles. In mechanics, as in poetry, there should be no place for mediocrity. And there is no reason why first-rateness should not be as common in garages as in shipyards. It can be made general, too, unlike first-rate food in the hotels, without interfering with the happiness of the ordinary man. Second-rate sausages may add to his happiness, but not second-rate garages. Let Mr. Hore-Belisha ponder this and strike the first blow in the war on behalf of the first-rate. Y. Y.

THE PECCANT DOCTOR

[From a Correspondent]

EVERY half-year, in the last week of May and November, there come to a building off Portland Place from ten to twenty apologetic doctors. They are summoned before the General Medical Council to answer charges of unprofessional conduct. The greater number have been convicted, more than once, for drunkenness and similar offences. A few have been guilty parties in divorce proceedings where it is alleged that adultery arose out of professional relationship. One or two appear on the charge of trying to steal their neighbour's patients. There are other crimes in the calendar, such as giving a misleading certificate or advertising in the press, but most of the cases fall into these first three categories.

The body which exists to try the cases is said to be the most expensive tribunal in the country. It consists of thirty-nine members, each of whom receives five guineas a day for his attendance, with railway fare and hotel allowance. It has been worked out that the General Medical Council costs about £60 for each hour that it sits. A disciplinary body one-tenth the size would certainly be cheaper and probably more expeditious. It is true that the Council is concerned with the education of the medical student as well as with the professional and private morals of the practising doctor, but its educational work usually does not occupy more than one half-day of its week's sitting. Its main task is disciplinary; it is there to keep the Medical Register "clean."

For such a purpose it is not only unwieldy but grotesquely constituted. Of this "jury" of thirty-nine, some thirty are college professors or persons engaged in university administration or in research or in consulting practice, remote in any case from the life of the busy practising doctor. Only seven out of the thirty-nine are elected by members of the medical profession. The others are appointed by the universities, the Royal Colleges, and the Crown. A body preponderantly professorial may be excellent for ordaining the medical curriculum—though even as to that some doubts have been expressed—but it is not well shaped for judicial functions. The example of Government tribunals would suggest a small body representing both the legal and the medical professions. No member of the General Medical Council has legal qualifications; the solitary layman, appointed by the Crown some years ago in response to an outcry for lay representation, is usually an Under-Secretary in the Government.

But if it was really necessary, this negligible exception apart, that the tribunal should be wholly medical, could anything less suitable be imagined than these serried ranks of professors, torn from their academic groves for a week at a time to explore the dubious territory of ethical deviations? Most of them know nothing by experience of the stresses and temptations of industrial practice or, come to that, of country practice. Yet the livelihood of the panel doctor or the doctor of any other sort may depend upon the vote of one of them—actually of one of them, for the issue as to erasure from the Register depends upon a simple majority. In any reform of the General Medical Council a two-thirds or three-fourths majority should be required before a penalty so grave could be inflicted.

The General Medical Council is sometimes reproached for harshness. The writer's own personal impression after watching its proceedings at every session for twenty years is that it is in most cases too indulgent. It constantly declares that its function is to protect the public, not the profession. Although wholly medical (again with the negligible exception), it is constituted to guard the public against the misdemeanours of the profession to which its own members belong. But it is precisely on the ground of public interest that some of the decisions of the Council seem open to challenge. Every session the Council has before it a number of doctors who have been convicted of drunkenness. At the last session, in May, 1936, there were twelve such cases, and they show a tendency to increase. It is important to bear in mind that very rarely are these doctors summoned before the Council as the result of one conviction. There must be aggravating circumstances if a first conviction of this kind brings the offender before the disciplinary body of his profession. Generally there are two, sometimes three, occasionally four, convictions before the erring doctor is seen in Hallam Street. At the November session last year one doctor had had four convictions for drunkenness, two had had three, one had had two convictions for drunkenness and three for other offences.

Even after three or four or five convictions it is the rarest event for the Council to inflict any penalty. It is not against drunken doctors that the phrase "conduct infamous or disgraceful in a professional respect" is used. It is not against them that the decree is pronounced: "The Registrar has been instructed to erase your name." The doctor appears and makes his explanation, that the magistrates had failed to take this or that into account, that the police witness was unreliable, or that he, the doctor, had been up all night over a grave case, or was at his wits' end how to deal with the calls upon him in an epidemic or, alternatively, that he was not on professional duty at the time of the offence. All that happens is that the President reads him a little homily, which has become rather stereotyped by unvarying repetition. (I must have heard it a hundred times.) He is told that these convictions indicate a habit which may be dangerous to himself and his patients, but in order to give him an opportunity of considering his position judgment will be postponed for six months. (Postponed judgment, by the way, means no restraint on practice.) At the end of the stipulated time, having avoided the police court in the interval, the doctor presents himself with local testimonials, and the case against him is dismissed. A former President of the General Medical Council, the late Sir Donald MacAlister, was keen on exacting total abstinence pledges from doctors in this position, and I have known as many as three new recruits for the Band of Hope enlisted in an afternoon.

Not infrequently it happens that after the case has been dismissed the old habit reasserts itself, and a new conviction is recorded. The offender is then more sternly admonished,

and put on a longer period of probation, sometimes having to report to the Council twice more before securing his release. But in the course of twenty years I recollect only one doctor—there may have been one or two more—who was struck off the Register for drunkenness, and that was after repeated convictions and appearances before the Council.

Contrast the indulgence of the Council towards the drunken doctor with its severity towards the adulterous doctor. To the doctor who has been respondent or co-respondent in divorce proceedings, should there be any suggestion that the lady in the case was a patient, no fatherly homily is addressed, no opportunity of probation is allowed—he is guilty of infamous or disgraceful conduct in a professional respect and banished from his profession. During the summing-up in the divorce court the judge (sometimes under a mistaken impression) may have mentioned that the lady had been attended by the doctor. The unfortunate man is brought before the General Medical Council before the ink on the decree is dry. He has to face a double penalty and also to bear the publicity which the ordinary respondent in the divorce court is spared. There is a restriction on the reporting of divorce court proceedings, but none, apparently, when such proceedings come at second-hand to the General Medical Council.

Sometimes these cases come forward on the complaint of the husband, who thus secures a double revenge; or the husband may short-circuit the divorce court, and instead of seeking a divorce may seek the professional ruin of the rival in his wife's affections. Professional relationship is variously interpreted. It may be that the doctor indeed first met the lady as a patient, but that professional relationship had ceased long before any immoral intercourse began. It may be that the doctor first met the lady socially and fell in love with her, but was indiscreet enough on the occasion of some passing illness to prescribe for her or to advise on the care of her children. It is all pretty much the same. The heaviest penalty which can befall a professional man is likely to overtake him. The adulterer is sometimes, of course, a wholly despicable person of whom the medical profession is well rid, but many of the doctors against whom the Council has pronounced have been gentlemen of sensitiveness and integrity who have done all that an honourable man could in the circumstances. But the axe falls as indiscriminately as the Almighty's rain, and they will be fortunate indeed if after a few years they can on application get back on the Register and rebuild their professional career.

Barristers in addressing the Council on these occasions are accustomed to remind them that they are not a court of morals. It is the public interest, not degrees of moral culpability, that the Council has to consider. Whether it is a greater sin to commit adultery than to get drunk is beside the point. Only very exceptionally is the doctor who has been through the divorce court likely to be any source of moral danger to his women patients. He is not, in the generality of these cases, a professional seducer; very often, indeed, the solitary seduction was on the part of the hysterical patient, but that is by the way. In a case of sudden emergency, with a call for the nearest doctor, who of us is withheld by the recollection that the doctor across the road has been through the divorce court with a patient? On the other hand, we may well be withheld, and instead call in the doctor in the next street, if we recollect that the man across the way has been before the magistrates on several occasions for drunkenness. The "divorce" doctor can be trusted to see to Mary Jane's adenoids or give the injections to little Johnny; the "drunk" doctor we would not be so willing to trust, even for the most trivial manipulation. Yet the "drunk" doctor is allowed almost invariably by the General Medical Council full liberty to practise his profession.

Erasure from the Register is, of course, a big price to pay for alcoholic indiscretion, even when such indiscretion, in the words of the President of the Council, "indicates a habit which may be dangerous to yourself and your patients." But the possible consequences of such indiscretions have to be remembered. The courts are more lenient to those who are "found drunk," even though they are "dead drunk," than to those who are "drunk in charge of a motor-car," though these latter may be only "under the influence." And surely to be in charge of a patient or of a score of patients is not less responsible than to be in charge of a motor-car.

What the General Medical Council badly wants is the power to inflict graded penalties. The only penalty it can inflict is erasure from the Register. Otherwise it can only admonish, or hold the ultimate judgment over the transgressor's head for a period. It has no instrument of castigation, but only the executioner's axe. There are certain other things it ought to have, such as the power to compel the attendance of witnesses and to swear witnesses. But most important of all is the institution of a graded scale of penalties whereby it may achieve its "object all sublime . . . to make the punishment fit the crime."

Correspondence

NEUTRALITY IN SPAIN

SIR,—I have been five weeks in Malaga without seeing an English newspaper. Then to my surprise and pleasure a copy of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION arrived yesterday.

It is very difficult to understand what you call the malevolent neutrality of the British Government over this civil war. During the Carlist wars (of which this is simply a continuation) English sympathies were all on the Liberal side. And there are now almost overwhelming reasons of self-interest for supporting, as far as is prudent, the Spanish Government. I can only suppose that the opinion of the ruling classes in England is becoming more and more pro-Fascist.

If a war in Europe must come, the only possible reason that I can see for being drawn into it is that it should not be a purposeless struggle like the last, but should aim at establishing a state of affairs in which everyone can live and breathe freely in Europe. It should be a war to establish peaceful and democratic ideas instead of Fascist. If we are to watch our natural allies, the democratic countries, destroyed one by one with the connivance of our Government we can at least make it plain that if this Government in the end bungles us into a war under unfavourable circumstances, as it is most likely to do, we shall not support it, we shall refuse to fight for it and the Labour Party will declare a strike to make such a war impossible. I believe that a very little pressure of this sort would assist the Government to take a different view of the Spanish situation.

The Spanish Government does not want intervention; it believes it will win in the end without that, for its resources are incomparably greater than its enemies'. What it does demand is that, since the Italians and Germans and Portuguese have supplied aeroplanes and munitions to the rebels, and are probably continuing to do so, it should be allowed to purchase an equal amount itself. It also asks that we should refrain from supplying the rebels with petrol and other supplies and from sending our destroyers to convoy those supplies past the blockading ships into their ports. So long as we continue to do that it is very little use protesting that we are neutral.

And aeroplanes? A week ago a few bombs fell on a poor quarter of Malaga, killing fifty people and wounding a hundred and fifty. Nearly all were women and children. Yet our Government declares it cannot prevent British manufacturers from selling aeroplanes for this purpose. GEORGE BEATON

August 22nd, 1936.
Malaga.

PALESTINE

SIR,—I read with great interest your comment on the Arab rebellion in Palestine in your issue of August 29th. Your remark that "unfortunately the action which the Government has been forced to take to quell the disorders can only serve to make the problem more intractable" is very true. In fact, the action of the Government in Palestine in trying to quell the rebellion is very similar to the action of a person endeavouring to extinguish a fire by pouring oil thereon. To the Arab the behaviour of the authorities *vis-à-vis* the Arab revolt is that of attempting at vengeance and reprisals!

The complaint of the National Committee in Lydda, to which you make reference, is only one example of the country-wide complaints against similar actions and behaviour by police and troops, in almost every town and village. The following telegram received from the elders of Tireh village (Haifa district) supplies the most recent example of what is taking place in the Holy Land.

British Authorities by order of District Commissioner attacked our village Tireh assaulting our leaders using all means of force and violence taking our cereals killing our chickens forty-six persons injured vide medical reports four hundred pounds violently collected from our village by Government owing to alleged murder of Jews outside our village boundaries although no evidence against us. Kindly protest on our behalf to His Majesty's Government in London and to British public opinion.

The British people, noted throughout the East for justice and fair play, should know of this and of similar incidents. Such incidents not only tend to increase the bitterness of Arab resentment and swell the ranks of the insurgents, but will also echo throughout the Arab and Moslem worlds to the detriment of British prestige, justice and fair play.

The worst phase of the action of the Government to quell the rebellion was the demolition of the old city of Jaffa by dynamite. The immediate result of that action, which was severely criticised by the British Chief Justice, was to make 6,000 Arabs homeless. They now live on charity, and throng the cemeteries, lanes, and open areas of Jaffa. One can imagine the psychology of those victims, and the reaction of the Arabs in Jaffa and Palestine to the incident and its results. What will really quell the Arab rebellion is a display of justice and not a display of force. Palestine, for the last eighteen years, has been hoping that justice will be forthcoming.

E. A. GHORY
(Palestine Arab Delegate.)

159 Knightsbridge, S.W.1.

THE SOVIET PURGE

SIR,—Surely in his attempt to explain the recent Moscow executions P. A. Sloan does his cause a disservice.

We read: "The same self-love that led them (Zinoviev and Kamenev) to defy the party in 1917 . . . forced them under Soviet conditions to use the only remaining means of possibly getting to power. This was the use of force."

Does Mr. Sloan consider this state of affairs desirable? I have no admiration for bourgeois democracy and earnestly hope that in Soviet Russia the seeds of a better civilisation are being sown, but there is no question that in me, and many like me, the recent events in Moscow have raised serious doubts and distress.

Far more important to my eyes than the degree of guilt of the prisoners is the fact (now frankly admitted by Mr. Sloan) that malcontents in Russia have no outlet for their frustrations *save in force*. Whatever other good a system may provide, surely this is a very serious flaw.

One is attracted to the idea of Socialism because (once established) it promises to provide the mass of humanity with a greater measure of fulfilment than is possible to any but a minority in the capitalist world. This, it seems to me, is the test of any system. What, however, are we to think when the system which claims to be the first to offer a chance of fulfilment to everyone demonstrates that it is breeding a discontented minority whose only outlet, it frankly admits, is force?

I want two questions answered.

(1) Why is the Socialist State, which ought to provide fulfilment for every one of its own citizens, producing this body of desperate malcontents?

(2) If this is claimed to be a temporary condition, due partly to the fact that Soviet citizens still carry—as a hangover—their conditioning under the old regime, and partly to the fact that Socialism is not yet fully established, what future conditions are envisaged in which this state of affairs will not arise?

I presume Mr. Sloan will not defend, as a permanent condition, one which creates malcontents who find their frustration so great that attempted assassination is the only way in which to relieve themselves.

LEONORA GREGORY

151 Holland Park Avenue,
London, W.11.

SIR,—In your leading article of September 5 you warn your readers against allowing themselves, as a result of enthusiasm, to react too violently to certain phases of revolution, but the example you set of half-hearted oscillation is scarcely a satisfactory alternative. Certainly it will have many of your readers in doubt as to whether you, too, are attempting "to exploit this proof of difficulty and violence in Soviet Russia"; for the admiration you express on general grounds for the success of the Revolution is at least balanced by your particular condemnation. This is, of course, a tenable attitude, but only on condition that your condemnation is founded in a fair consideration of the facts. And this, I submit, is not the case in your article. On the contrary, you obscure the issue by misstatement of the problem.

Where you say, "Very likely there was a plot. The public evidence is not of a kind to enable us to speak with confidence," you are merely begging the question of why the accused confessed; which, as you say previously, for you "constituted the mystery." For the public evidence consisted of the prisoners' confessions and such statements as they chose to make, or as were elicited from them by the Public Prosecutor, in open court. From that evidence, which is adequately summarised and easily available in *International Press Correspondence*, it is clear not only that there was a plot, but also that all the accused were implicated and that Trotsky, with the help of the Gestapo, was directing it. In face of this to suggest, as you do, that the connection between Zinoviev and Co. and Trotskyism is due merely to the "traditions of the G.P.U." is absurd. The only doubt you can justifiably entertain is whether the confessions were *bona fide* or not. But you have posed this problem so clumsily as to be misleading. When you ask, "If they had a hope of acquittal, why confess?" it is not clear what you mean, since there are at least two reasons why they might have hoped to be acquitted: either that they were conscious of their innocence, or that though guilty they hoped to be able to disprove their guilt. Unless, however, you regard the whole case for the prosecution and the evidence given at the trial as having been concocted by the police, they can have had little hope of the latter. If, on the other hand, they were innocent, why should they have confessed at all? Isn't it possible, and indeed probable, that having found from past experience that confession was met with clemency, they hoped again to mitigate their punishment by a full avowal? Or do you suggest that though innocent they were tortured into making false confessions?

But I suspect that what really worries you, and what you have allowed to obscure your understanding of the trial, is not the fact that they were convicted, but that they were executed. In this country we are so accustomed to political renegades being rewarded by the State that it is difficult for us to envisage a state of affairs where a political crime is regarded as an act of treachery against the whole nation. But the fact that in Russia they see things differently is possibly a proof not of barbarity, but of a deeper and fuller sense of responsibility on the part of the "politicians" towards the people.

D. M. GARMAN

Hurst, Petersfield.

[Our correspondent seems to be in a muddle. The first problem is why the accused confessed and asked for the death penalty instead of attempting to defend themselves or to get their sentences mitigated, as normal men, innocent or guilty, might be expected to do. "Torture" is not a likely reason; a confession under torture would probably be withdrawn and we have no reason to think that torture is now used by the G.P.U. The alternative explanations we have heard are that the accused feared for their wives and children if they did not say what they were expected to say, or that they were promised their lives if they confessed. The only other explanation we have heard advanced is that "Russians are like that; they enjoy confession and execution." We assert none of these things: we only ask for a rational explanation, and we say that confessions *without independent corroborative evidence* are not convincing.

Secondly, as to the plot. If there was really a plot of this extent, endangering the regime, Soviet Russia is not so stable or so near the possibility of democracy and personal freedom as is commonly suggested; if there was no plot we have merely witnessed a method of getting rid of a possible Opposition. As a number of people have been arrested and imprisoned or exiled without trial, we tend to the opinion that there was a formidable plot, but that the opportunity was taken at the same time for disgracing or otherwise silencing people guilty only of entertaining independent views.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

ABYSSINIA AND THE LEAGUE

SIR,—The report in the *Times* of Sept. 7 that M. Avenol is to offer to Mussolini a formula involving the refusal to permit a representative of Abyssinia at the forthcoming meeting of the League is alarming.

It is natural that the civil war in Spain should occupy the minds of those interested and worried by the events in foreign affairs during the past few years, but the Abyssinian question must not be allowed to be brought to so dishonourable a close as this suggested formula is quite obviously designed to achieve.

Italy was declared an aggressor by more than fifty nations of the League; how then comes it that the Secretary-General of the League should, one is given to understand, go to Rome for the purpose of bringing Rome back to the table at Geneva? Should he not be occupied in endeavouring to liquidate the unhappy business without further shame being brought upon the League for its failure to prevent a member, whose conduct of the whole affair was based upon strict adherence to the Covenant and not, as was that of Italy, upon the wholesale breaking of treaties, from being entirely destroyed?

It is not necessary to state that one does not wish a continuance of the war, but that Italy has been passing further supplies of gas through the Suez Canal has been announced in the *Daily Telegraph*, and that, in itself, should be sufficient to prevent the smaller nations at Geneva from wishing to sit at the same table as Italy. If the Italian aggression is completed and if Italy is continued to be considered at Geneva as a suitable member of the League and Abyssinia is to be considered as a pariah, then no small nation, no weak country, is safe from any Power to whom either its destruction or its annexation appears desirable.

2 Rosary Gardens, S.W.7. F. BEAUFORT-PALMER

BRITISH METHODS IN INDIA

SIR,—It is little comfort to those of us who opposed the new Constitution for India to find that the Government are already placing obstacles in the way of its proper working. If, however, my information is correct, and I have no reason to doubt the accuracy or integrity of my informants, this is certainly the case in Bengal, where there exists a small but influential reactionary party called the United Muslim Party, which is represented in the Government. In order to capture the machinery of the new Constitution a number of radicals have formed the Praja, or Tenants' Party, based on the worker and peasant. It is, of course, impossible for the Government to declare this party illegal, but it seems determined to do all it can to prevent its growth. To this end high Government officials are being permitted, if not encouraged, to canvass for the United Muslim Party, and to dissuade people from joining the Praja Party. Professors appointed by the Government, District Officers, Inspectors and other civil servants whom one would expect to observe the usual canons of political impartiality, are allowed to denounce the Praja Party and to urge support of the United Muslims. It is alleged, too, that favouritism has been shown in the promotion of junior officers, who are known to support the United Muslim Party, to important districts usually reserved for senior officers. In one district such a newly appointed officer has been upsetting on trivial grounds the election to the District and Local Boards of members opposed to the Government; the importance of this lies in the fact that it is to a large extent the members of these boards who determine the election to the Provincial Houses.

Perhaps such methods would have little influence in this country, but to anyone who knows the wretched poverty of India and the way in which the spirit of the people has been broken, their effect will be apparent. ANTHONY GREENWOOD

The Old Ship Cottage,
East Mersea, Essex.

BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

SIR,—Mr. Lerner and Mr. Sweezy see everything in terms of Capitalism and Communism. This leads them to misinterpret the slant of British public opinion to-day. Capitalists and Communists in this country are, I suppose, about equally numerous, each 1 per cent., perhaps, of the population. The great majority of people are neither the one nor the other, and are just private individuals. But, in that capacity, they have one overwhelming preoccupation—the avoidance of war.

What "Socialist" and Mr. Lerner and Mr. Sweezy and perhaps, Sir, you yourself tend to overlook, as an explanation of events, is the overwhelming success of pacifist propaganda in this country. Now that you are minded to criticise the Government for having recently avoided at least three suitable opportunities for risking war, you underestimate the effect on others of the pacifist movement of the past ten years. When the League of Nations was set up in 1919, the country was not pacifist in the sense that it is now. The pacifism of the average League supporter to-day has, unavoidably, weakened the League. Since, at the moment, the capitalist "anti-reds" do not desire action, this unquestionably plays into their hands. As Sir Norman Angell has pointed out in his brilliant article in the *Political Quarterly*, from which you recently quoted, that is what none of us foresaw. But to see that only is to miss the greater part of the picture. The dominating factor behind this country's policy is not the malice of the "anti-reds," but the blind determination of the average man to keep out of war, including preventive wars, and out of threats of war, including those which may not, in fact, involve it, and out of hypothetical commitments for war, including those which may help to keep the peace. In this Mr. Baldwin represents the country, and that (not Lord Rothermere) is the source of his authority.

You may approve this or disapprove it. There is—there always was—much to be said against a too unqualified pacifism. But those who fail to observe it and interpret everything in terms of Capitalist and Communist theory are blind to their surroundings. J. M. KEYNES

Tilton, Firle, Sussex.

POLITICS AND WITCHCRAFT

SIR,—Mr. Geoffrey Pyke certainly deserves praise for demanding that more intense scientific research should be devoted to ridding the world of myth-making. But many of his readers will have been amazed to see that it should be "Herr Hitler who has pointed the way" to this goal. Surely, if this is not an extremely subtle form of irony, Mr. Pyke has forgotten all he said before in his otherwise very penetrating article. That Hitler, one of the most cunning myth-makers of our times, should help us to escape "from the dynamic credulity" which binds us to the witchburners and the believers in magic is a contradiction in terms.

All suspicion that Mr. Pyke may have been sarcastic when he wrote that vanishes, however, when he—as a proof for his contention—quotes from Hitler's plan for twenty-five years' peace. Mr. Pyke does not say, as any of his readers would expect him to do, "Aha, I can tell you why you say that." No, his naive comment is: "The purpose is clear. Germany proposes the demilitarisation of the lie." Really, the purpose *is* clear, but obviously not to Mr. Pyke. It is not the demilitarisation but the concentration of the lie upon *one* other country. The incessant campaign in the German press and propaganda against Soviet Russia and the working-up of hatred and suspicion which recently preceded the increase of the time of military service are ample proof of that.

Mr. Pyke desires that the German scholars who are to aid in the destruction of myth should be Aryan. Again, one does not know whether this special emphasis on race is yet another attempt at sarcasm or whether Mr. Pyke shares the "belief in contemporary Germany" that Jews have a "dangerous quality," a problem to which he devoted a paragraph earlier on. Perhaps he would like the assistance of one of those scholars who produce that "ghastly drivel" which "Critic" mentions in his comments on the book *Anti-Semitismus in Wort und Bild?* W. B.

STANDARDS OF LIVING IN U.S.S.R. AND BRITAIN

SIR,—Mr. Archibald Robertson's analysis of the state of the case as regards economic imperialism is illuminating in more ways than one. He suggests that overseas investments have benefited British labour indirectly by making British capitalists more squeezable on the whole. This may or may not be true, but it is certainly not the whole truth of the matter. The investment of British capital in tea plantations, for example, may or may not benefit labour indirectly by making capitalists more squeezable. It benefits the workers directly by enabling them to drink tea bought at a modest price. If the worker benefits by the exploitation of backward peoples, he benefits primarily through the price at which he obtains the products of their labour. These direct benefits of economic imperialism to labour are certain, calculable and important. The indirect benefits about which Mr. Robertson makes such a pother are dubious alike in extent and importance.

Moreover, the state of the case as Mr. Robertson expounds it is a piece of conjectural analysis excogitated in his private study. So far as I am aware, neither he nor any other Marxist has ever attempted to justify it by an appeal to facts. They assume it to be true, because they would like it to be true. Mr. Robertson admits grudgingly that the skill, etc., of British workers may have

done something—not much of course—to improve the position of some British workers—not many of course. How do the Marxists know that the indirect effects of economic imperialism are the all-important factor in the comparatively high standard of living of the British workers, and the character and skill of the workers only a minor and almost negligible factor? As a matter of fact, they don't know. Without examination and without evidence they assert it as an incontroversible truth, because it seems to them the most hopeful way of minimising the contrast between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. In Marxist circles this is called thinking realistically about society. In other circles, where men are befogged by subjectivism and idealism, it would be recognised for what it is, either self-deception or intellectual dishonesty.

The Marxist, Mr. Robertson tells us, is not prepared to draw any kind of line between legitimate and necessary features of economic imperialism and its abuses. Every feature of the system, every event in its history, every form of exploitation for which it has been or is responsible, is equally legitimate, equally necessary, and if I may so abuse the term, equally abusive. Since all profits are derived from exploitation, it makes no difference whether the form of exploitation be cruel and inhuman as in Leopold's Congo, or mild and humane as in some well-managed tea plantation. But even if one accepts, as I do not, the Marxist theory of exploitation, it cannot be right to refuse to distinguish between forms of exploitation which are intolerable and forms which may for the present be tolerated. I never claimed to draw any hard and fast line; but to refuse to draw any line at all, to regard the worst excesses as just as much part of the system as other more normal abuses, is in my judgment a form of intellectual dishonesty. Incidentally, the terms "necessary" and "inevitable" in Marxist philosophy are ambiguous and have no defensible intelligible meaning.

It is part of the Marxist controversial technique to represent all who differ from them as poor deluded idealists living in a subjective and unreal world. Marxists are the only realists, thinking objectively and honestly, free from all personal bias and prejudice, pure scientists. This arrogant claim is either sheer cant, or else it is the delusion of fanatics, a terribly dangerous delusion, because it breeds and justifies all kinds of untruthfulness and cruelty.

H. G. WOOD

Old Quarry, Almeley, Herefordshire.

THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE

SIR,—On August 1st you published a letter from me in which I made certain remarks based on an article by Mr. Garnett on Mr. Mencken's book *The American Language*.

As I admitted, I had no knowledge of the book, but gathered my ideas from the article. I now understand that these ideas were quite wrong and no doubt were not the ideas which Mr. Garnett meant to convey. I gathered that Mr. Mencken was laying down certain rules as to the correct words to be used to convey certain ideas (for example, he might have said that "elevator" was correct and "lift" incorrect, or *vice versa*), and, being interested in the subject but not yet having read the book, I described such attempts to legislate as "absurd" and "pontificating."

I am sorry that I conveyed a wrong impression about Mr. Mencken's thesis. My criticism, however true in the abstract, did not apply to this particular book.

ADRIAN STEPHEN

50, Gordon Square, W.C.1.

THE SALZBURG FESTIVAL

SIR,—Mr. W. J. Turner's judgment on the Salzburg Festival will be shared by many who have attended regularly for several years. The performance of Milhaud's *Le Pauvre Matelot* was one of the few signs of vitality in the Festival, apart from the lasting greatness of Toscanini's conducting. May I add to Mr. Turner's notice the fact that the production of *Le Pauvre Matelot*, with its completely French atmosphere, and the familiarity of the singers with a difficult score and a constructionist stage set, were due largely to the untiring efforts of Herr Hofstetter, the founder of the Music Studio? Although hampered by opposition from the Festival Committee (he was even forbidden to engage a ballet company during August) his production showed that there may be hope for a rejuvenated Salzburg in the future. Maybe the Music Studio will gradually extend its activities in opposition to the Festival; or, better, this salutary influence from outside will urge the Festival Committee to reconsider the apparent sacrifice of quality to box-office revenue, and, in particular, the excessive demands made of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Then, in a few years, Salzburg could claim again her musical supremacy in Europe.

Let us hope, meanwhile, that the B.B.C. will revive their abandoned project of performing *Christopher Columbus*, so that in England we can hear a full-sized choral work by Milhaud, whom Mr. Turner calls "the most gifted of the known contemporary French composers."

RICHARD R. FORD

32 Percy Street,
Tottenham Court Road, W.1

ENGLISH HOTELS

SIR,—Mr. Woolf presents the sorriest of spectacles, that of the intellectual defending the uneatable. May I, by way of collateral corroboration, edify your indulgent readers by bringing up on paper the following most unedifying and inedible repast served upon me a few days ago by a "filthy stripling" on a railway journey. *Item:* Mulligatawny soup, well illustrating the literal meaning of "mulligatawny," which is derived from a Tamil word meaning "pepper water." *Item:* Grilled fish with a top crust like solidified larva, accompanied by a sodden potato. *Item:* Boiled chicken accompanied by more dusky and sodden balls, a heap of tough yet entirely tasteless and watery French beans, a few very autumnal leaves of lettuce and some stray melancholic wisps of other one-time green-stuff. Followed an aptly named plum-tart complete with section of crust possessing all the essential characteristics of common carpenter's plywood, the whole costing four shillings and sixpence. I defy Mr. Woolf or anyone else to come upon such an assemblage of grotesque oddments purporting to be a meal on any Continental train or to deny that precision of palate such as is the birthright of the French nation is an essential part of true civilisation. Finally, I recommend any of your readers who still require convincing after reading Mr. E. M. Forster's devastating and delicious letter to obtain the English Folk Cookery Association's *Good Food Register* (price 6d.), which has been compiled presumably in order to show what the best English hotels are capable of. They can then judge for themselves, but I can only say that such meals as I have been at pains to sample from the list have convinced me that its purpose has been only too adequately achieved!

GEORGE RICHARDS

3 St. George's Terrace,
Regents Park, N.W.1.

SIR,—I have recently returned from the South of France by motor coach, and I can assure you that hotels charging the same as our smaller English hotels do not provide "hot" water in their taps. Baths are always extra, and are difficult to obtain.

In London, I can stay in a small hotel where, for 6s. per night, I get a room with really hot water in the tap, a bath and an excellent breakfast with fruit.

In Lyons, a hotel charging the equivalent price was distinctly uncomfortable. The water was cold, there was no lavatory on the landing, and to take a bath one had to cross a yard in the rain.

KATHLEEN RUCK

20 West Cromwell Road, S.W.5.

GOLD FEVER

SIR,—If Mr. David Garnett thinks Mr. L. M. Nesbitt's reminiscences in *Gold Fever* are not slightly fictitious, he is entitled to say so; but it is a pity that he should make fantastic statements in the present tense about Rand gold mining. I quote only two consecutive sentences from his review of that book in your issue of July 18th.

"The white miner has an expectation of eight years of life before he succumbs. Miners and engineers are in the habit of having X-ray photographs taken from time to time, showing the dark deposit of silica dust in their lungs, and these they pin up beside photographs of actresses."

White miners are compelled to be medically examined free of charge every six months by a staff of doctors under the control of the Miner's Phthisis Bureau set up by the Government. Annually each miner's lungs are X-ray photographed by this Bureau and the plates carefully examined for the first signs of silicosis. The Bureau has published the fact that no miner who has joined the industry within the last ten years has yet contracted silicosis.

Natives employed on the Rand gold mines receive free board and lodging and are paid between seven and seventeen shillings per week; high wages for "slaves, except in name, watched over and beaten, etc." But Mr. Garnett is hopelessly misinformed on the

whole subject. Mining on the Rand to-day is a highly specialised trade demanding sobriety, physical fitness and intelligence. It offers good wages, good holidays and as much independence as a wage earner may expect. We do not have to ask our employers if we may marry, but then we earn a good deal more than the £200 a year of the bank clerk mentioned in "A London Diary."

Vogelstruisbult G.M.A. Ltd., East Rand. F. H. UPCOTT

Miscellany

A BRITISH FREE PEOPLE'S THEATRE

AT different periods in the history of human society the theatre has had a different meaning. Sometimes it was the theatre of the people, at others that of the aristocracy. The Greek tragedies were people's tragedies. The dramas of Euripides formulated the actual burning religious and political problems which preoccupied the Greek people. The comedies of Aristophanes dealt with everyday political questions. Their heroes, whether in serious or satirical roles, were exponents of their own times. Other times and certain other political systems, on the other hand, persecuted the theatre and saw in it a menace to the morals of society and its strength. Either they did not understand the social function of the theatre or they understood it too well.

One of the great purposes of art is to purge the passions, to strengthen the will, to broaden the vision and to deepen the sense of right and wrong, of true and untrue, of social and anti-social. The theatre has also an important political function. The bourgeois theatre is in fact very often a powerful political instrument, though it pretends to be non-political. When the bourgeois class was in the ascendant its theatre was revolutionary. In *The Marriage of Figaro*, in the dramas of the young Schiller, in *The Dumb Woman of Portici*, one sees the revolutionary spirit of the young, rising bourgeoisie attacking the privileges of the aristocracy and of the feudal overlords. By the time the bourgeoisie had itself seized power and was satisfied, the drama no longer questioned the fundamental structure of society. The basic social relations were treated as eternal, sacrosanct and immutable. Only the conflicts and passions of individuals, of the sexes and of cliques, were dramatised, only the symptoms were dealt with and the fundamental issues of society remained untouched. When this happens, the audience is led to believe that social functions are static, eternal fate. But Fate itself changes in the course of history. There is seldom human fate which is not determined by society. Only a few values and circumstances are eternal.

Now, we see that in the last decade a new type of theatre has arisen, which stands in direct opposition to the ordinary theatre. Some might call it social, others revolutionary, and a third might consider it the proletarian theatre. It is the artistic expression of those social strata which, during centuries, have been suppressed and without rights, and which to-day are struggling to claim power and rights, and are striving to shoulder social order.

This movement began in the 'nineties. Its first artistic expression was social realism, which in Germany is called "naturalism." As long as these dramatists, such as Hauptmann in Germany, Gorky in Russia, Galsworthy and Shaw in England, showed in satirical vein only one aspect of society, or expressed the sufferings of the people and aroused the pity of the audience, society adopted their dramas and comedies in a more or less tolerant spirit. But when dramatists arise who portray the people as an independent force fighting for freedom, no longer asking for pity, but out to conquer and claim their rights, then indignation is aroused and one says these plays are propaganda.

In Germany the importance of the theatre was recognised much earlier than in this country. At the time in the 'nineties when the commercial theatre was putting on merely vapid and superficial plays, which meant nothing to the people, and which were supposed to be "thrilling," though they were in fact merely boring, and wherein the costumes were far richer than the content, a theatre association was founded in Berlin. It called itself the Free People's Theatre—*die freie Volksbuehne*. At first only a couple of dozen people joined it, then there were thousands, and at the time before Hitler came to power this organisation claimed millions of members throughout the country. It had the active support of the Trade Unions, the Co-operative Unions and all progressive organisations. The Berlin Volksbuehne alone had more than a hundred and fifty thousand regular members, and owned one of the most beautiful and most modern theatres in Berlin, in which every day an audience of two thousand people listened spellbound to classical plays or to tragedies and comedies which represented their own case, and gave word and form to their hopes, dreams and conflicts.

The organisation of these theatre associations was democratic. Every member paid about two shillings a year, which entitled him to see twelve performances. He paid one shilling extra for each performance. There was a universal price to members. A ticket for the front row of the stalls cost no more than that for a seat in the gallery. Seats were raffled before each performance. The theatre was run by a staff of experienced technical and administrative experts, the repertory was selected by a committee to which members who could claim artistic competence themselves belonged. This theatre was not reserved for members of the association only: it was there for everyone with the difference that non-members were obliged to pay the usual West-end theatre prices, that is, ten shillings to twelve-and-six for the best seats. If one of the Volksbuehne plays was a great success, people flocked from the richer districts to see it, thus adding to both the income and future possibilities of the Free People's Theatre. The most famous actors appeared on this stage, the most distinguished producers gave their services. Actors who commanded the largest star salaries in Berlin's West-end theatres were willing to work for a few months for the People's Theatre for modest sums.

Every big provincial town in Germany, indeed even quite small villages, had their own People's Theatre associations, which had their own administration but were in connection with the head office. The country had many regional and local branches. Where these branches were not large enough to support their own theatre, they had it in their means to determine what play should be given in the commercial theatre. They ordered from the director a regular number of tickets for certain evenings and requested that certain classical and modern plays should be given. At regular intervals special performances were given for the members of the Free People's Theatre only. These were closed to the general public.

It is my firm belief that a similar enterprise would have the greatest possible chance for success and development in this country. During the years in which I have lived in England I have had the opportunity to visit many parts of the country. To my astonishment I have discovered how many hundreds of amateur dramatic societies there are. The amateur theatre has its own great importance. But it can never fulfil the mission which the professional theatre has. The professional theatre need not compete with the amateur theatre: both have different functions, which are often complementary.

In hardly any other European country have I met with a more enthusiastic theatre audience than in this country. With what rapt attention, with what lively pleasure it follows the action on the stage! No wonder. England is, after all, the land of Shakespeare, and a Shakespeare could not have arisen among the English people had there not been the public.

The time has come to build up a true Free People's Theatre in England. Large sections of the population who to-day

attend bad films or doubtful places of amusement can be re-won for serious drama. But one condition is necessary: the best is just good enough for the people. The best actors must play, the best producers must stage, the best plays must be given. Such a People's Theatre should foster classic drama and it should ease the way for young playwrights of all countries whose work may still be immature but who show promise of strength and talent. I believe that in a few years a group of young dramatists—of whom there is at present a dearth in English letters—will come into being once given a theatre which will produce their works. For certain forms of art are smothered for lack of air in which to breathe. A Free People's Theatre does not mean that a play should be given merely because it expresses the right convictions. The best convictions have no meaning in the theatre, can indeed only do harm, unless presented and allied with true aesthetic force to give them form and significance.

ERNST TOLLER

FAREWELL, ENG. LIT.

FAREWELL "Father of the Heroic Couplet . . . Uncle of the Sex Lyric . . . strong lyrical vein . . . Lamb's sly rejoinder."

Good-bye "influence of . . . killed in a tavern brawl . . . it is surprising that so eminent a scholar as Dr. Bell . . . willing suspension of disbelief . . . cp. cf. *sic.* [*sic.*] ff."

A familiar world, still flourishing at the outward parts, but dying at the centre, is passing. The time has come to preserve its likeness, to describe its features for posterity. This world, which revolves round editions of, histories of, talk about, and biographies of the authors of, English Literature is actually nameless; yet much of the reading life of many of us has been spent within its precincts. "Eng. Lit," or "Lit," as it might be called, has pursued us beyond school or university days. Newspapers have been founded to cater for it; famous old dailies have regular Lit pages; there are journalists who live by pushing in articles on Cobbett, or the Discordant Marriage of the Carlyles: plays are written round its more Dickensian characters and themes: a book on the Hardy Country would till very recently go to ten thousand: Chaucer's *Prologue* is quoted in silly season leaders: charabanc trips to Dove Cottage are regular in holiday programmes: Gray's *Elegy* is broadcast with the Stoke Poges churchbells as effects: the postman who meets me as I catch the last post says, "And so to bed——."

But now, there is a change. The waters are sinking. The arcane source is drying up. History demands, Science demands, that before it disappears altogether, some record of Lit must be preserved.

The Order of Merit. Its standards are based on an absolute distinction. On one side stand certain unapproachable creatures, the Great Writers, phenomenal and separate; on the other side stand Us. The names of these great ones are ranked, in one unalterable order of merit. *Shakespeare* No. 1 . . . long pause then *Milton* and *Wordsworth* bracketed second . . . Fielding fourteenth, Cowper nineteenth . . . and so on. How has this hierarchy been established? There was none of this fixity a hundred years ago. Not even the absolute number oneness of Shakespeare was taken for granted. Nor has the ranking followed the judgment of leading members of the order. Johnson, in the *Lives of the Poets* thought Pope worth twice as much space as Milton, and Addison (as poet our one hundred and sixteenth) four times as much as Gray (our 32nd). Byron's ranking of his contemporaries reverses their Lit order:

> Scott is undoubtedly the Monarch of Parnassus . . . I should place Rogers next in the living list . . . Moore and Campbell both *third* [then] . . . Southey and Wordsworth and Coleridge. . . .

How wrong, in the eyes of Lit (or as Lit would say, by the verdict of Posterity). For what are the qualifications demanded from candidates? Indispensable for inclusion in the Big Twenty is what may be called "knowledge of the heart." In practice this means that absolute preference is given to writers who concentrate successfully on human traits and types, who describe to the reader the psychological detail of Man as the reader knows it already. But even knowledge of the heart is not so important as the possession of a clearly cut character. Johnson, Shelley, Carlyle, are ideal men for Lit. Each has the clearest of lines. Shelley is "burning youth and idealism," and if the whole of his life and writings cannot be reconciled with an adolescent picture of such a type, his life is irrelevant. Herrick, we will say, is by virtue of twenty poems, "Cavalier Love Lyrist," sweet and charming. If his collected works seem to present something quite different it makes no matter. They are "later work" or a "sick man's fancy."

The fact is that the Lit public, or readers *about* (as distinct from readers of) Lit, like to identify themselves with these heroic figures. But, curiously, it is not the traits of sensitive apprehension, powers of experiencing and knowing, which they like to find analogies of in themselves. It is a common *human weakness* they settle on. No. 12 was unsuccessful in his domestic life: No. 16 rewrote his letters before publication so that he himself should appear in a more favourable light: No. 35 was contemptibly sycophantic in his dedications: No. 60 took drugs. Human weakness and human strength as well—but never beyond the all-too-human. Too much superhumanity would make difficult that process of identification by which each Lit man chooses his favourite character from the hierarchy of writers and warms himself in the blaze of it, seeing in the traits for which his favourite is most famous richer expressions of more tentative traits in himself. Thus Johnson, it may be, is their idealisation of their own after-dinner wisdom: Carlyle their own crabbed unsociability seen as eccentric genius: Byron their desperate anti-social, good-man-gone-bitter selves: Wordsworth themselves admiring the view: Coleridge themselves not keeping an appointment, or smoking too many cigarettes: Pope themselves scoring off an enemy: Addison and endless essayists their smilingly thoughtful selves: and Charles Lamb,

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of course, *themselves*, human, humorous, admirer of poets yet no poet: critic yet sympathetic understander of human nature as well.

Lambination. Charles Lamb, in fact, is the archetype of Lit Attitude A. Lambination has little to do with its original and stimulating Founder. The influence of Lamb's *manner* of writing is bad only because all such influences are bad.

The Lambinator is gently opposed to that other great Lit group, the Notes-on-Shakespeare group. He mildly denunciates all such painstaking work, because he is the idler with the pipe. What he goes in for is Human Side, which he understands perfectly because he is so tremendously human himself. He contemplates, he understands, and however many examples there may be to prove that genius can be fervent, sensual, violent, hating, there is always the implication that the essential writing is the Lambinatory kind of writing, in which quietness, contemplation, and humour dashed with sadness and a touch of Ah-the-Past is the thing. His qualification for writing about Lit subjects is an implied learning, a suggestion that he is soaked in the *minutiae* of his subject (knowledge of the great famous things to be taken for granted). And he expresses this knowledge by the inverted comma attitude. His reader will have a feeling that every other line contains a phrase too famous even for quote marks, and that he himself has blundered into a cultured circle of old friends in which he is a hopeless outsider. Ben Jonson is called "Ben," Donne is "Jack Donne," Jane Austen (on account of some private joke into which he cannot join) is "Miss Austen," and there will be unexplained references to things like "Dorothy's pin money," "S.G.'s glass coach," or Gray's "Scroggie." The Lambinator is allusive. "In my book," says Whitman, "there will be no reference to other books, poems, authors. . . ." But for Lit Attitude A even its character of thoughtful Humour seems quoted. Allusions are what it feeds on, and allusions are what it produces. But the same crop won't grow on the same patch for ever. So farewell, inverted commas: good-bye, Lamb's sly rejoinder; farewell, " ". STEPHEN POTTER

SHAKESPEARE FILMED

"As You Like It," at the Carlton.

Though this film has rather a feeble plot, it is superior to all others in one respect—the excellence of its dialogue. Herr Czinner, the director, seems not to have been entirely aware of this excellence, for far too much of the film is silent: after a minute of dialogue, we have a minute of mere photography, so that the *allegro* appropriate to comedy is reduced to a most depressing *adagio*. Evidently the technique of the film is different from that of the stage, and Herr Czinner has been interested to see what new advantages the camera can bring to the interpretation of Shakespeare. "None" would seem to be the answer, in so far as this production is concerned. The most obvious advantage would be in the settings, and these are the worst feature of the film. The exterior of Duke Frederick's palace looks as if it had been designed by Buzzard or Gunter, and the interior resembles the foyer and corridors of a Super Cinema De Luxe. The forest scenes are less vulgar but more insipid. It would have been possible to improve on a stage performance by using natural scenery, with romantic horizons and photogenic clouds. Alternatively an artist might have enchanted us with a stylised Arden. Falling bang between two stools, this film gives us a would-be realistic forest erected in a studio—prosaic, stuffy and sadly lacking the beauties of either art or nature. And the director's chief contribution to an idyllic atmosphere has been to introduce continual processions of sheep, chickens, ducks, cows, cranes, and swans (to say nothing of a lioness, a python and Nanna out of *Peter Pan*). Much of the acting is excellent. Miss Bergner is enormously accomplished, and achieves her effects with the certainty of long experience. She cannot, of course, give us the English music of Shakespeare's verse, but she is never incomprehensible. Indeed her fault is to dot every i twice, to double-cross every t: she is altogether too emphatic, too expressive. Her conception of Rosalind has the merit of being comic and high-spirited, but there is an extreme archness in it which may grate on those who cannot live up to Sir James Barrie. At any moment, we feel, this Rosalind may ask us to clap our hands if we believe in fairies. But Miss Bergner's gravest mistake is that she has taken from Rosalind her innocence. Shakespeare's heroines are not mealy-mouthed, but they are fresh. And here the smile at moments lengthens to a leer; the jerkined girl weighs the luscious Orlando with too greedy and too knowing an eye, and we feel that she will reveal herself a witch and gobble him up. Peter Pan has got mixed up with something out of Strindberg. How disappointing that Miss Bergner with all her talent should so have missed the real Rosalind! Mr. Laurence Olivier's Orlando and Mr. Leon Quartermaine's Jaques are triumphantly good: when they are speaking we are indeed in Arden. They give us a notion of the delight which Shakespeare filmed could be. Mr Ainley as the Duke has a most melodious voice, but the microphone exaggerates certain actorish vowel-sounds, from which the two others are admirably free. Celia's vowels struck me as faulty in a graver way. It was no doubt necessary to cut the play, but can there be any good reason for so cruelly truncating or omitting the songs? Mr. William Walton was responsible for the music, and we should have liked much more of it. Altogether this production is too unsatisfactory to throw much light on the film possibilities of Shakespeare, but at least it should warn future directors not to hold up the dialogue with needless patches of silent camera-work. We hope to see a film *Macbeth* or *Othello*, for Shakespeare's tragedies are far easier than his comedies. Many of his jokes are feeble, his poetry is beyond human praise.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Swing Along," at the Gaiety

Musical comedy, like incandescent gas mantles, Homburg hats and the architecture of Sir Reginald Blomfield, has an Edwardian flavour which appeals to the sentimental amateur of the *neiges d'antan*. Coming out of the Gaiety, one sees the ghosts of gilded youths, laden with orchids and monocles, waiting at the stage door to conduct bosomy chorus girls with puffed-out hair to supper at Romano's. A spectral urchin beside a hansom whistles *Yip-i-addy-i-ay*. And in the theatre, the scenery and jokes maintain the sweet illusion: the Gaiety girls of thirty years ago have dwindled into dowager peeresses, but Messieurs Harker's backcloths are as immutable as the mountains and the rivers which they represent. And many of the jokes are vintage. But the leading ladies now are not Dorothy Perkins but American Beauties. Miss Louise Browne has the albino hair made modish by Hollywood, and Miss Zelma O'Neal turns the soubrette into a tough baby, a rogue in pig-iron rather than in porcelain. The scene is France, and the plot concerns a would-be Yellow Shirt Dictator, who has a double. But the comic possibilities of this subject are sacrificed to the convention that musical comedy must not leave the narrow path of puerility. The chorus girls are pretty and disciplined, the music is not unwhistleable, and Mr. Fred Emney shows what experience can make out of rather thin material. But it is Mr. Leslie Henson we go to see. He is a three-dimensional caricature, a Bateman hero in the flesh, as malleable as a figure in a Disney film, with legs which grow suddenly shorter, arms which he can put "out of drawing," and a gutta-percha face. His drill in the No Shirt Army is specially scrumptious fooling, and all the funnier for being implicit criticism: the frantic laughter it started suggests that we are not yet educated up to the delights of totalitarianism.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, September 11th—
"Careless Rapture," Drury Lane.
National Rose Society's Show, New Horticultural Hall.
Prof. P. M. S. Blackett, Luke Fawcett, Mrs. Cecil Chesterton and others on "New Soviet Constitution," Essex Hall, 8.

SUNDAY, September 13th—
S. K. Ratcliffe, "Ourselves and the Spanish Crisis," 11 a.m., Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1

MONDAY, September 14th—
"Love's Labour's Lost," Old Vic.
"The Tiger," Embassy.
"Sylvia und Ihr Chauffeur," Academy Cinema.
"Animal Crackers," Everyman Cinema.

TUESDAY, September 15th—
"This'll Make You Whistle," Palace.

WEDNESDAY, September 16th—
"Girl Unknown," New ?

THURSDAY, September 17th—
"Certainly, Sir," Hippodrome.
"Monkey Business," Everyman Cinema.

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE publication of *Sherston's Progress* (Faber, 7*s.* 6*d.*), in which Siegfried Sassoon completes the triology which he began in *Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man* is really, what publishers claim for every second book, an event of real interest to all of us. There have been many accounts of the war in France but, in retrospect, too many of them leave much the same impression as an album of family photographs: the people are posed and sit with unnatural petrified expressions upon their faces. *The Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* is in a different class. It is spontaneous, vivid and full of the quality of life. Sassoon was attracted by some of the dangers of war —by getting to grips with the enemy for example—and by a lucky gift for introspection is able to show the effect of the war upon a highly strung, exceedingly courageous temperament. It seems that we can only learn about war at second-hand from brave men. The cowards cannot see what is going on sufficiently objectively, nor can they really make us share the sick and abject fatalism of fear. It needed Shakespeare's genius to express the philosophy of cowardice: no Thersites has written an honest account of the Western Front. Sassoon had that rare mixture, only found in the very finest men, of extreme physical courage and great sensitiveness and imagination. Whether that is the reason or not, or whether Sassoon simply happens to be a better writer than any of the others, *The Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, which I read again this summer, seems to be much the best of the war books I know. It contains the most marvellous account of actual fighting, and the ending, in which Sherston makes his protest against the war and refuses to go on fighting, shows us that his courage and initiative was not of one sort only and is a wonderful climax, a climax which is of the utmost interest now, since in the war which is now being organised, there will be many to imitate him. It will be most interesting to see whether the Sherstons are treated with individual attention, or just impatiently got rid of.

* * *

Sherston's Progress opens with unavoidable anticlimax. Sherston had acted from emotional rather than intellectual conviction and had expected resistance. But the military authorities were far too clever for him and his protest against the war was doomed directly his friend, the poet "David Cromlech," had lied to him and betrayed him by telling him that he would be certified insane. Thus Sherston was "saved from himself" by Cromlech, who persuaded him to go voluntarily to the shell-shock hospital, at Slateford, and his protest had fizzled out. It took him some time to realise this. Slateford, once a hydro, had become a hell which was elaborately cheerful by daylight, when the doctors did everything possible to counteract the gloom.

> But by night they lost control and the hospital became sepulchral and oppressive with saturations of war experience. One lay awake and listened to feet padding along passages which smelt of stale cigarette smoke. . . . By daylight each mind was a sort of aquarium for the psychopath to study. . . . But at night each man was back in his doomed sector of a horror-stricken front line where the panic and stampede of some ghastly experience was re-enacted among the livid faces of the dead. . . . Shell-shock. How many a brief bombardment had its long-delayed after-effect in the minds of these survivors, many of whom had looked at their companions and laughed while inferno did its best to destroy them. Not then was their evil hour, but now; now, in the sweating suffocation of nightmare, in paralysis of limbs, in the stammering of dislocated speech.

* * *

Sherston, however, was not suffering from shell-shock, but supposed to be making a political protest to stop the war which produced these effects upon his companions. As he had no notion how to do so, he played golf, polished his clubs and talked to W. H. R. Rivers. For it is typical of all that is best in England and in the English system of government, that the great psychologist and anthropologist Rivers should have been put into uniform to deal tenderly and persuasively with Sassoon, who would have been shot in any other country. The excitement of getting to know Rivers was immense and his influence the biggest personal factor in Sherston's life. And it was delightful out of France and playing golf and improving at it every day. So that when that talkative, self-opiniated pacifist Doctor Macamble sought Sherston out with congratulations in excruciating taste, and then pointed out that if he wanted to get a move on with stopping the war, there was nothing to prevent his taking the first train to London, Sherston was positively horrified, and he is so still:

> I suppose I ought to have waxed indignant. Good Lord, he's trying to persuade me to do the dirty on Rivers! . . . And have I been too hard on him? Well, I can only say that nothing I can do to Doctor Macamble could be worse than his advice to me—had I been imbecile enough to act on it.

Sherston had already "done the dirty" on his colonel and his regiment, but he was incapable of realising that if you are going to act on principle, and embark on stopping wars, personal "loyalties" have to go by the board. But the passion of loyalty was very strong in Sherston and it is not surprising that he felt about Rivers as he did. The whole episode of Sassoon's protest reminds me irresistibly of seeing a fine young ram break away from the flock and, stamping its hooves, defy the shepherd. An amused smile, a look to the gentle wise collie which will wait patiently, will cajole and not threaten, knowing that sooner or later the young rebel will tire of defiance and lose confidence. Then with shaggy collie at his heels, back he goes happily, helter-skelter, feeling safe again because he is with the other muttons, running down the road to the butcher's to have his throat cut.

* * *

"One can do such a lot with a nasty look," said the young lady who boasted that all her lovers were at the front. Rivers never gave Sherston a nasty look; for one thing he knew that it was unnecessary. He could be left to take his own time. Having shown his mettle, having thrown away his M.C. ribbon, and contracted a new loyalty which preserved him from the worst consequences of his protest (it would have involved prolonged contact with the worst types of crank), Sherston went on playing golf for a bit and then went in and told Rivers his decision and saw an expression of relief come over his mentor's face. The English system had won a victory. And compared with any alternative, what a wonderful, humane system it is! Sherston was reinstated, without formalities, as "an officer and a gentleman" and immediately the tone of the book changes completely. The uneasy, almost evasive note of bad-temper disappears and we plunge into the most delightful, glorious pages which have the freshness and the beauty of *The Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man*. Actually the first results were exchanging golf for hunting with the Limerick pack. (There is an irresistible portrait, in the tradition of the greatest English farce, of a gloriously tipsy Irishman.) Next Sherston was drafted to Egypt, then to Palestine, and brought back, without seeing any fighting, to France. He was by then a Captain and found relief by looking after his men and protecting them from the stupidities of his superiors. There are wonderful pages, taken from his diary, describing the day-to-day life of his company. But when, in due course, he found himself in the front line trenches, the old Adam broke out again. Neglecting his duties, he got hold of a bayonet and was soon wriggling his way, about mid-day, across to the German trenches.

> I regarded myself as having scored a point against the people who had asserted that I was suffering from shell-shock.

A second excursion, when he bombed a machine-gun, ended in Sherston's being shot through the head by the "most delightful N.C.O. I have ever known," as he was getting back into the British trenches. And a flavour of asperity escapes him as he records the incident. However, Sergeant Wickham is treated more sympathetically than Doctor Macamble.

DAVID GARNETT

from JONATHAN CAPE'S SEPTEMBER list

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The Ramparts of Virtue. By JOHN BROPHY. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

Journey into Freedom. By KLAUS MANN. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

Daze, the Magician. By ANTHONY BAERLEIN. *Arthur Barker.* 7s. 6d.

The poetic souls of novelists twinkle through the windows of their titles. Choosing a title may be a parlour game for armament manufacturers, it can be an enticing beginning to a day-dream about never-to-be-written novels; for reviewers it is a matter of setting 'em up, and roll, bowl or miss the milky coconut. *I Am Death* is a bald announcement. It sounds far more like the comfortable ending of some modern womb-delving mysticism, than a title (as it is on this occasion) for the history of an Irish slum-dweller's paranoia. The Joycian "Nighttown" squalors, brawls over banisters in Georgian tenement houses, days and nights decked with whiskey and cold wind on street corners, punctuated by the gramophone and the gallants of the harlots on the second floor, by the maudlin curiosity, half maternal, half harpy, of the caretaker, by drunken Jack Mulligan's Irish songs, with the communal lavatory and the cheerless public library—here is a background for portraiture, which, like the photographer's rosy bower, is no longer fashionable. For a generation that has swallowed its James Hanley, and gulped down its Liam O'Flaherty, such dismal atmospherics can have no virtue of themselves, though here they are taken for granted, and there has been no attempt to make a sociological case of the circumstances which, about half-way through this book, send our poor underfed, underclothed hero off the rails. Wretched, unemployed, dole-less Morgan, bullied by his brother, taunted by the old women of the house in which they live, infuriated by the contemptuous glances of Moll Kelleher's sleek customer, goes from morose introspection to active resentment of the people who barred his way on pavements, to planning the extermination of the people, "whores, parasites, gigolos," who were his enemies because of their wealth. He is cracking up, you see, and once this notion has got a hold on him he is done. Ordinary behaviour is for ordinary folk—he is a killer, and with a killer's supreme self-confidence, a superman. He is the founder of a new order, a guardian and crusader for morality who is himself above morality. Your schizophrenic is a melodramatic subject, almost too picturesque for some tastes. But there is a sort of fascination in watching the development of his "off-key" logic, and his obsession with sexual guilt. "Whores, parasites" and all the rest of them quail before his frantic eye. "Who am I?" he murmurs as an accompaniment to a stab with a 6s. 6d. jack-knife. "I'm Nobody—yet I'm Somebody. I'm Death. Wasn't it said that I'd come like a thief in the night—or in the day?" This book is convincing Irish, convincing psychosis, and should appeal to those who like their character studies laced with a little violence.

Violence gives *But Beauty Vanishes* a flying start. It is, to be exact, an overlap from a previous book by Richard Blaker (*Here Lies a Most Beautiful Lady*). Hester Billiter lay in a darkened room, her head a mass of bandages. John Billiter was dead. Pollock, the young Scots engineer, lay in the next room recovering from a crashing blow with a pistol butt which had made a "boneless heap of him." All this was in an oilfield in the Caucasus in the previous book. For the benefit of new readers, Hester goes over and over in an allusive way all that has happened before. There they lay in Chiswick, in the house belonging to Hester's grown-up daughter, Beryl, and Stewart, her husband. These four and George Billiter are to all intents the people of the book; in the seven years it covers, hardly anyone else appears. In the seven years Pollock and Hester recover, physically, from their ordeal. Beryl gives up art, becomes a mother, seems to have an affair with Pollock, and finally comes out as a perfectly ghastly woman novelist. Stewart survives his wife's eccentricities and the war, steering rather cleverly and with a minimum of force. Pollock becomes an airman and tries to prove to himself that he isn't a coward by dangling a Military Cross. Mr. Blaker's technique is elusive. He likes the inference, he is fond of the implication; his characters have a most determined lack of vividness, and even the more obvious ones, the stockbroker-like George, the stubborn Scot and Beryl in her eccentric mood, are hard to get hold of, while Hester and Stewart are almost lost in the foggy riverside nights of Chiswick. To me the whole seemed like some special sort of firework: a great flare up at the beginning, then a long fizzing with only the smallest, softest explosions and a loud pop at the end. I shall be very much surprised if Mr. Blaker does not seize on that pop to start off his next chapter.

The Ramparts of Virtue are to protect a middle-aged Liberal journalist. Oliver Antrobus was a specialist in foreign affairs, a writer of superbly resonant, non-committal and almost meaningless leaders. He had cultural associations, too, the Louvre meant something to him, but above all, he was English, tremendously English. He couldn't do a caddish thing and wouldn't do a mean one. The main interest of this book is in his behaviour towards a chorus girl, twenty years younger than himself, whom he picks up in a lunch bar. Falling in love was a difficult business for him. Conducting a love affair with a frankly non-moral little bit called Mike Mandeville even more so. His constant concern is to prove to her that he is not like any other middle-aged man on the flying trapeze of calf-love. Poor Oliver had the makings of a first-class dirty old man in him, but, being a Liberal and a leader writer, he was just a little too conscious of his evil intentions—and so, by way of expiation, had to sit in far corners of taxicabs, kiss her hand with a great show of old-world courtesy and shower presents on her to make up for the lack of the more ordinary manifestations of love. The situation is grand material—and when it is transferred to erotic Paris and Vienna (a City so Gay, see *Congress Dances*) it should provide enough to fill the mere 286 pages required by this novel. Mr. Brophy didn't think so; he was determined that his readers should have value for money, so that now they get, in addition to the battle over Oliver's anxiety neuroses, two sub-plots in which Nazi brutality is neatly interlocked (by means of a coincidence or so) with a lot of stuff about the workings of a great newspaper. For my part, I could have done without hearing how they heard the news of the Reichstag Fire, the Moscow Trial and the Dimitrov Trial; I could even have dispensed with the grand *dénouement* when all three plots explode simultaneously in a Viennese hotel bedroom—fine though it all is I would willingly lose it, for another thirty pages of poor Oliver trying to explain to his little friend that what an English (cultured) gentleman feels about the bright eyes, the white bosom and the elegant legs of a chorus-lady is not lust, but respect.

Journey Into Freedom, by Klaus Mann (a son of Thomas Mann), has also an undertone of Nazi Terror, though here it is made more an essential part of the action. A young girl—Nordic blonde, but unhappily for her, with pan-European associations—escapes from Germany to Finland, and goes to stay with a girl she had met on holiday the year before. Here, in a great decaying mansion, surrounded by black lakes and blacker forests, she falls in love with her girl friend's brother. They have no English queasiness, and even the presence of a plump Hanoverian Hitler-fan in the house couldn't put them off their moony-spoony stroke. After a day or so in the grand house they sailed away in a battered pea-green motor car, headed for the North Pole or the North Star. Before, however, they could reach either of these places, the telephone recalled them to earth, to live happily never again. The English translation, by Rita Reil, is rather jerky, and one gets the impression that the whole thing might have sounded better in German. In English it sounds a little amateurish, and, to say the least of it, somewhat highfalutin.

Daze, the Magician is out of its time. It has a period flavour (not this period), not only because of its Wellsian subject, but because of its elegantly turned phrases and the no less elegant diversions and excursions from the matter in hand that they express. Daze himself is a delightful comic creation, ruthlessly funny. He is a magician (or conjurer) only for effect, for he is a scientist who loves applause, and who, when he realises that his achievements can be made to look like conjuring tricks, hastens to the Palladium. Unfortunately for us not very much is known of him. In the early days at Eton, he was a rare one for experimenting, a menace not only to his own guinea-pigs, but, when he was short of money, to anyone else's, too. His friend (who recounts this story) saw him only occasionally, and even then was not taken into his confidence. We can only imagine the agonising situation when a page-boy blundered into Daze's laboratory while he was in the act of doubling himself, and we can sympathise with him; something had to be done about that page-boy. And we can only guess at his suffering (he was a sensitive creature) when he was forced by circumstances to transmit that detective, bodily by wireless, on a wavelength to which no one was tuned in.

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METHODS OF ESCAPE

Away From It All. An Escapologist's Notebook. By CEDRIC BELFRAGE. *Gollancz.* 10s. 6d.

On Another Man's Wound. By ERNIE O'MALLEY. *Rich and Cowan.* 8s. 6d.

Matabele Thompson. An Autobiography. Edited by NANCY ROUILLARD. *Faber and Faber.* 12s. 6d.

Seven. An Essay in Confession. By ROM LANDAU. *Nicholson and Watson.* 10s. 6d.

The World My Oyster. By DAVID WYNN. *Rich and Cowan.* 12s. 6d.

Since the desire to escape is universal, it only remains to choose some trustworthy and well-organised means of transport—to see that the service is fairly regular and that we do not allow ourselves to be inveigled into embarking on one of those expensive and picturesque branch-lines which continually bring the traveller back to his starting-point. Here are a few itineraries that have been put forward. Three of the spiritual pilgrims listed above advocate some form of direct action, inspired by belief in a political or social cause: Mr. Landau holds up the superior attractions of religious faith: while Mr. Wynn celebrates the pleasures of romantic rambling. Let us begin with the practical and active group. Mr. Belfrage and Mr. O'Malley are both rebels; and Mr. Belfrage, in an extremely entertaining and, at times, extremely exasperating book, describes how, after several not unprofitable years among the flesh-pots of capitalist society, he decided to break away from Fleet Street, film studios and all that they represented and set off on a journey round the world. Judged by escapist standards, it was not a success. Mr. Belfrage did not enjoy himself. He was lonely, uncomfortable, very often he was acutely bored; and, at such moments, he would write, cable or even telephone to Mary, a young woman whom—most ungallantly and inexplicably—he had left behind in London. Thus, he discovered that Mary was his real objective. He discovered, too—the kind of discovery we are each of us obliged to make for himself—that we cannot outdistance our own private problems, and that travel is a drug which very soon loses its first sedative effect. He has now (he tells us) escaped from a desire to escape by embracing the doctrines of Communism. The story of his adventures is written from a strictly Marxist angle; and, whatever the reader's personal convictions, he may find that the pertinacity with which Mr. Belfrage jabs, pokes at or roundly belabours the poor old capitalist system tends to become a little monotonous towards the end. Three-quarters of the book are ordinarily readable. Mr. Belfrage's education in Fleet Street has endowed him with a brisk, slangy, somewhat unprepossessing prose style, which lacks charm, but does not lack vividness; and he makes the most of the appalling social contrasts that he observed on his way—noting, for example, the anomalous position of the Indian Princes which enables "a Bikaner to spend in one year eleven times as much of the state revenue on himself and family as on education," or "an Alwar to buy £66,000 worth of motor cars in a year and £7,500 worth of education for his 700,000 subjects."

One section of the book, however, rises far and away above the level of surrounding episodes. At Auckland, Mr. Belfrage was bitten with a longing to visit the South Seas and allowed himself to be persuaded to ship on a schooner bound for Apéuka. This boat was the property of an adventurous middle-aged Englishwoman named Mrs. Scott; and with her, besides Mr. Belfrage, she took an indolent and unamiable young man called Roy and a tough, disreputable, down-at-heels Australian sea-captain. The ship's company was ill-assorted; the weather was bad; and the South Pacific (Mr. Belfrage soon learned) is probably the world's nastiest, stormiest and most treacherous piece of sea. The travellers had had delightful visions of sleeping on deck under a star-powdered heaven. Alas, they spent most of their time tossing amid a welter of mountainous grey waves, cooking unappetising meals in a cramped and smoky galley, getting wet and squabbling with extraordinary virulence. Mrs. Scott quarrelled with Roy, and Roy with the Captain; the Captain hated and despised them both; and Mr. Belfrage, though secretly he preferred the skipper, tried hard—but ineffectually—to keep the peace. At their second port of call, the expedition broke up and the project of sailing to Apéuka was abandoned. Mr. Belfrage's schooner ride seems to have been an unusually instructive, if not a very enjoyable, experience: certainly, he has turned it to brilliant account.

Mr. O'Malley is a different type of rebel. *On Another Man's Wound* describes the adventures of his early life—a life wholly taken up with a single passion, transfigured by the pursuit of a single idea, before which all other ideas, passions, inclinations seem to have faded into insignificance. Not for Mr. O'Malley the commonplace difficulties of growing up. He escaped them by consecrating his youth to the Irish Republican cause. A boy at the time of the Easter Rebellion, he left a comfortable home to adopt the career of a revolutionary organiser, hounded from place to place, seldom able to sleep two nights in the same bed. *On Another Man's Wound* reflects that tranquillity of spirit which is the reward of those who are able to sink their identity in some all-absorbing, all-important crusade. There can be no doubt that, when his life was in constant danger, Mr. O'Malley came nearer happiness than a great many men whose lives and prospects are perfectly secure; for he concentrated on the work in front of him—which was to harass, demoralise and shoot down the British army of occupation—with a dispassionate selfless enthusiasm; and to-day he can write of ambushes and assassinations, of the bombing and burning out police barracks, as calmly and unsentimentally as if he were narrating his adventures in the hunting-field. His book is well written, in the characteristic Anglo-Irish prose, which has something of the softness and cloudiness of Irish bog-water. It contains admirable passages: and the chapters in which he describes his own imprisonment and torture are as quiet, smooth and unhurried as the rest of the narrative.

So much for two rebels against British imperialism. Matabele Thompson, whose autobiography has been edited and completed by his daughter Mrs. Rouillard, was one of the men who helped to build up the British Empire as it exists to-day—a good-natured, stout-hearted pioneer whom more unscrupulous Imperialists sometimes found an extremely useful tool. His story is divided into three main sections. First, there is an account of how, during an early Kaffir war, his homestead was besieged and taken by storm, his father killed and his brother so cruelly maltreated that he died some years later in England. Next, he tells how he helped to reorganise the South African diamond fields at a time when the illicit diamond traffic had reached formidable proportions; thirdly, how he was entrusted by Rhodes with a delicate and dangerous mission to Lobengula, King of the Matabele, and after many vicissitudes was able to persuade the King to sign a document that led eventually to his downfall and the annexation of his land. The last section is specially worth reading; for it reveals the unselfishness and courage that may be devoted to a selfish and cynical cause. Thompson can have had no doubt that Rhodes contemplated annexation; nor can he have imagined that Lobengula would long continue to hold his territory once he had signed away its mineral rights; yet he set to work "getting round" that irascible and bloodthirsty monarch with a mixture of hardihood, tact and gentleness that the most high-minded statesman or administrator might have envied. It is true that he disapproved of the policy that was adopted after his departure; but otherwise there is scarcely a hint of criticism; and the following passage, which deals with his reorganisation of native labour in the diamond fields, is illustrative of his attitude throughout the book:

> My first step was to make arrangements with the chiefs . . . for a continuous supply of labour. When this was done I set to work to design and superintend the building of the compound. . . . Round the whole area I built a wall twelve feet high. Within this enclosure the several stores were placed. . . . There was also a dispensary and hospital, and a swimming bath. My plan was that the natives should be locked up within the enclosure for three months, and have access to the mine only through a covered way and down an inclined shaft to the workings, some five hundred feet below the surface. My first difficulty was to persuade the natives to consent to be locked up. I encountered strenuous opposition from the small shopkeepers in the mining areas. . . . In due course, however, I had my way, and was able to notify the Directors of De Beers that on the following Monday I intended to shut the gates. This I did; the closed compound system was thus brought into operation, and the main gates have been opened only once since then.

With *Seven*, we plunge headlong into the mystical labyrinth. Mr. Rom Landau has already published a volume entitled *God is my Adventure*; and *Seven* retails rather more discursively his spiritual meanderings in search of a faith. The less devotional chapters, which depict the author's youth, education and early travels, may be described by saying that they will probably make a strong appeal to that legion of lost sheep who have elected Dr. Axel Munthe their good shepherd; for they have something of the elusive picturesqueness with which we are familiar in *The Story of San Michele*, and discourse of strange people, far countries and odd adventures in the same gossiping and cleverly

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cosmopolitan style. But the passages that Mr. Landau devotes to his spiritual quest deserve more careful study. Mr. Landau is desperately anxious to believe; and during the last ten or fifteen years he has strayed from the footstool of one prophet to the footstool of another, trying Keyserling, Khrishnamurti, Ouspensky, Rudolf Steiner and "even Gurdjieff." He is honest enough to admit that, now and then, he has been disappointed—"by the hopeless vagueness of Khrishnamurti's statements and the self-adoration of Keyserling; by the intolerance in Ouspensky's classes . . . and by their secretiveness and artificial solemnity." On the whole, Steiner seems to have come nearest to having given him complete satisfaction; and it was from Steiner apparently that he first gleaned the important truth that seven is a sacred number, and that the lives of men and the destinies of nations may be divided into seven-year cycles. Analysed with the help of the number seven, history yields up some extremely interesting results:

> It is significant that what is regarded as the most famous and most important education in history, that of Alexander the Great by Aristotle, was based on the rhythm of seven years. When in 345 B.C. Aristotle became Alexander's teacher, the pupil was almost twice seven and the master was almost six times seven years old. . . . Alexander's father, Philip of Macedon, was conscious of that common link between his son and the great philosopher and expressed his gratitude for that "accident" of his son's birth in a letter to Aristotle: "I feel great gratitude," Philip wrote, "not so much because of the birth of my son, but rather because the gods let him be born in *your time*." "Your time" referred to the common seven-year rhythm by which master and pupil were united.

After revolutionary, imperialist and earnest faith-seeker, Mr. Wynn trips on to the stage in the rôle of the Complete Romantic, who wanders because the wanderlust is in his blood. "I've had the wanderlust ever since I can remember (he writes in his Introduction). . . . I'm not too good at it yet, but, rightly or wrongly, the members of our sect—the Glorious Company of Hobos—call me the *King of the Vagabonds*." This self-portrait sets the tone of the whole book. Mr. Wynn is unabashed by frontiers, unalarmed by the suggestion that if one wishes to cross the Atlantic first class one must buy first-class tickets. Somehow —though penniless and friendless, he has always managed to wriggle through to the other side—to bluff his way through the most impossible situations. Personally, I find his method unsympathetic. Fear of the ticket-collector makes it difficult to observe the view.

PETER QUENNELL

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NOTES ON EVERYTHING

Obiter Scripta. By GEORGE SANTAYANA. *Constable.* 10s.

This book consists of essays, lectures and reviews by George Santayana, collected and edited by Justus Buchler and Benjamin Schwartz without the author's supervision but with his eventual blessing. The papers reprinted cover a period of thirty years, and naturally do not hesitate to contradict one another. They are introduced by an author's preface which resembles, and is almost as disarming as, the last words of the eighteenth century Marquise—"Je me regrette." Mr. Santayana regrets that some of his work betrays how much he has suffered from "a slack education, conflicting traditions, deadening social pressure, academic lumber, and partisan heat about false problems." This is an accurate and exhaustive list of the faults of *Obiter Scripta*. It warns the reviewer that the philosopher has achieved the rare and difficult feat of seeing himself in historical perspective, and that no useful purpose will be served by pointing out how he was influenced and misled by the theories and prejudices of 1904, 1915, 1925 and 1930. The historian of successful philosophy will, however, find this book invaluable. The names of Fichte, Croce, Herbert Spencer, Dewey and Proust appear with an emphasis and an importance strangely unfashionable to-day. The essential contribution of Santayana himself is, he suggests, an awareness of the need for "a human orthodoxy" such as he discusses in his essay on "Philosophical Heresy." He wishes there could be a generally acknowledged body of truth as perceived by the "lights and insights of common sense" which would be a guide to good living. The essays in this book are the record of an earnest though unsuccessful search for a doctrine which could be both true and practical politics.

These papers are difficult reading—not because the thought has had to be too closely packed, but because the style is too "good" to be really clear. The hypnotic effect of literary prose, which a friend of Mr. E. M. Forster complained of in Lowes Dickinson, is constantly present here, and it is not the only disturbing influence. Santayana's tendency to end his essays with a purple "O Altitudo!" is too reminiscent of the sermonic manner of the emotional preacher not to produce a stock reaction of suspicion in modern readers. Another thing which comes between writer and reader is the Fancy which, the preface notes, "peeps out timidly in one or two places." Since the poor wretch was divorced from Imagination by S. T. Coleridge, Fancy has never been very well received by society. Although poetic metaphor may sometimes illuminate philosophical discussion, it has a way of blurring the edges of definition at the same time.

Perhaps an annotated catalogue of these notes on everything will give a fair idea of the quality of *Obiter Scripta*. First there is a dialogue in the shades in which Socrates is witty about Genesis, German philosophy and the nature of knowledge. It is principally an attack on the extremists of idealism—an attack which recurs frequently in various forms in the book. Here is a quotation from the weakest part of it: "The madman, too, is the author of his own world and breeds another to be the mirror and counterpart of his free and irresistible impulse; yet the airy dagger with which he stabs himself leaves him still alive, the fancied fountain at which he drinks leaves him still thirsty, and the art of life is defeated by his visions." There are three essays on aesthetic subjects: "What is Aesthetics?" "Penitent Art" and "An Aesthetic Soviet." They examine thoroughly the ingenious spanners which psychology and social theory have flung into the works of aesthetics.

There is an essay on Hamlet dated, in every sense of the word, 1908. Other reviews or lectures are given over to Plotinus, Literal and Symbolic Knowledge, Herbert Spencer, Proust, and Spinoza. "Philosophical Heresy" contains a tentatively offered theory of what philosophy ought to become. It is the core of the book, and cannot be honestly summarised. The following passage is taken from the essay on "Some Meanings of the Word 'Is.'" It should be read aloud regularly to all psychologists, doctors and politicians when they grow argumentative:

> One school of philosophers will maintain that everything physical is really mental, and another school that everything mental is really

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physical. A capital instance of this habit is found in the phrase, dear to critical philosophers, that something "is nothing but" something else. Thus we hear that a word is nothing but a *flatus vocis*, that a house is nothing but bricks and mortar, that a mind is nothing but a bundle of perceptions, that God is nothing but a tendency not ourselves that makes for righteousness, or that matter is nothing but a permanent possibility of sensation. The phrase "nothing but" claims adequacy for the definition that follows; but a definition can define adequately an essence only, it cannot pretend to exhaust a fact; therefore, if such assertions are taken strictly, they themselves become "nothing but" definitions of fresh terms, and not discoveries.

When Mr. Santayana avoids "style" he has many valuable contributions to make. FREDERICK LAWS

DETECTIVE CHORUS

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Clue for Mr. Fortune. By H. C. BAILEY. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

During the summer holiday season the massed bands of detective writers are called upon to play their loudest; but as their best soloists are also taking a holiday, they have to make up in volume for what they lack in tone. Their programme, moreover, tends to be confined to popular favourites. This week, for instance, they are playing that old friend, The Country House Symphony, no less than four times, while the transatlantic saxophonists are scheduled to moan out three versions of Those Detective Blues. In addition we are treated to a selection of Mr. Fortune tunes by Mr. Bailey, an intermezzo by Mr. E. C. R. Lorac and an Edgar Wallace March.

Mr. Roger East's *Detectives in Gum Boots* is my preference among the renderings of the country house murder, although the relevance of the gum boots remains a mystery to the last. Superintendent Simmonds is not called upon to act in this case, as that amiable couple Mr. and Mrs. Knowles manage to elucidate the disappearance of Lord Thurcaston without professional assistance. There is a disarming frivolity about Mr. East's style which prevents too close an analysis of his plots while you are busy reading them; and in any case the plot of *Detectives in Gum Boots* is not worth recapitulation as it belongs to the *solvitur ambulando* class, which would be unbelievably boring if not handled with Mr. East's dexterity. But there is a botanical clue of an ingenious nature which deserves more attention that I gave it. I warn conscientious readers that they must have an *Encyclopaedia Britannica* handy if they wish to do the clue justice. It is unfortunate, however, that the clue by itself is not made to provide the solution, but only an indication of the solution, as I have always hoped to meet a detective story which had to be solved entirely by genuine special knowledge in the reader.

With Intent to Kill also is solved by means of a clue, but one involving general knowledge only, and therefore more obvious. Mr. Charles Vivian's plots are always well-constructed and repay concentration, but I wish Inspector Head were not such an uninspired disciple of Inspector French in the "pertinacity" school of detection. A prospective buyer is shown over an empty house in the country by an estate agent and finds a corpse on the premises. The corpse comes from London but the killer is evidently of local origin. Then Inspector Head starts on his railway time-tables and his checking-up of a solitary hairpin at all the hairdressers within a radius of twenty miles until we would like to scream at him that a perfectly good clue is sticking out for investigation right under his nose which he refuses to give a thought to. But nothing will divert the Inspector from his slow-footed progress up every blind alley.

Miss Gladys Mitchell and her Mrs. Lestrange Bradley make an overpowering combination under any circumstances, and when they get mixed up with Headington Morris dancers and Oxfordshire pig-farmers the *mélange* is too deadly for my weak stomach. Miss Mitchell in *Dead Men's Morris* rears a towering edifice of inconsequence, pretentiousness, pig-learning and bogus psychology, such that none but devotees of Mrs. "Alligator" Bradley can attempt to surmount.

Mr. Leo Bruce has indulged in a skit on Poirot, Lord Peter Wimsey and Father Brown in his *Case for Three Detectives*. Under the thinnest disguises these three champions each solve the murder of Mrs. Thurston in an apparently locked room in her country house—with each time a different solution. The case is, of course, a simple one as things turn out, and is solved finally and correctly by the local police sergeant by mere routine methods. As the reader and the three amateurs are denied the benefit of these routine methods until the last chapter, the sergeant's air of superior perspicacity is donned rather cheaply. The caricatures are amusing up to a point; but since it is a foregone conclusion that the characteristic theory which each detective elaborates must be based on false premises, the joke is soon exhausted.

Headed for a Hearse, *Murder at the Polls* and *I'm Afraid I'll Live*, are three American variations on a detective theme, with a jazz instrumentation of blackjacks, police sirens and Thompson submachine-guns, and throbbing with bourbon whisky and dames of every sort. Under the welter of liquor the plots, as is inevitable, become somewhat diluted. *Headed for a Hearse* is presumably the toughest as its scene is Chicago, the natural habitat of the "typewriter." *I'm Afraid I'll Live*, however, runs a close second, and is as tough as the American colony in Paris can make it. *Murder at the Polls* in the comparatively abstemious atmosphere of Philadelphia is less subject to the phenomena of hang-over and clings courageously to its plot; the plot, however, has its roots "buried in the past," and a lot of erratic spadework is required before these can be unearthed.

In *Pall for a Painter* a teacher at an art school in London is murdered by means of a plaster cast. A Bohemian setting among art students sounds promising, but there is a spinsterish quality in Mr. E. C. R. Lorac which defrauds us of our juicier expectations; even the life model, a splendid specimen and under suspicion, is of the masculine gender. The plot, however, is

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sound even if the detection is haphazard, and for mild reading *Pall for a Painter* can be recommended.

Mr. Maxwell March can turn out an Edgar Wallace as well as anyone but Edgar Wallace. The master-mind of villainy in *The Shadow in the House* is a sweet-faced, tiny old lady with grey curls and "priceless old lace at throat and wrists," who tricks the heroine into marrying her scapegrace son. The book is what a thriller ought always to be—totally improbable and wildly exciting. What a quintessence of melodrama we experience when our feet "sink into the deep pile of the Aubusson carpet!"

Mr. Fortune I have always thought best suited to magazine lengths. *Clue for Mr. Fortune* contains six fifty-page Mr. Fortune stories and shows that Mr. H. C. Bailey is still on the happiest terms with his tubby little creation. Though I can never like Reggie I find it impossible not to get a sordid pleasure from his nonsense.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

POLITICS AND PLANNING

The St. Lawrence Deep Waterway: A Canadian Appraisal. By C. P. WRIGHT. *Macmillan.* 18*s.*

Except for the economic geographer there might seem little to interest the reader in a book with this title. But such a hasty writing off of Dr. Wright's book would be a bad mistake, for it is both entertaining and illuminating. It is entertaining because there is a good deal of comedy inherent in the whole situation; it is illuminating because we can here see what sins may be committed in the name of "planning," when the planners are only responsive to local and party pressure (not to dwell too much on personal interest), and when the elementary rules of scientific investigation are neglected. It is Dr. Wright's contention that the need for a deep waterway bringing ocean-going vessels into the great lakes has never been proved, that such a fundamental question as the minimum depth of the waterway (if there is to be one) has been answered in a slovenly and misleading fashion, that the power aspects of the problem have been dealt with almost as casually, and that they have involved such unpleasant episodes as the scandal of the Beauharnois development, a scandal which both the great Canadian parties have combined to stifle. Dr. Wright does not put it quite so bluntly as that, for one of the attractions of his book is its bland manner of assembling damning facts and letting the reader reflect on them. One point of procedure is well worth noting, the failure of the International Joint Commission to make a real investigation: "the Commission seems to have abandoned the active direction of the investigation to such local and partisan interests as chose to appear before it." It acted, that is to say, as a court does, and as Dr. Wright sometimes hints his apprehension of "new despotisms," it is as well to remember the defects of old procedures. But Dr. Wright makes no bones about killing the already dead. He uses the butt-end of his pistol even when it has not missed fire. Thus he points out that among other factors making doubtful the optimistic estimates of the probable business of the new waterway is the existence of the Hudson Bay route. He then notes that the greatest annual wheat export from Churchill has been only five million bushels, but it "may rise within the next few years to some 15 to 25 million bushels of grain a season." This isn't very much and might not disturb the promoters of the St. Lawrence waterway unduly. Indeed it "would be a painfully poor return for an expenditure of some 50 million dollars. . . . But such uncalculating commitments have been by no means uncommon occurrences in the history of Canadian economic development." Dr. Wright is determined that the new commitments will not be made without a vigorous protest, and if not all of his case is equally impressive, enough is made plain to make the simple optimism of the promoters look odd. One minor point of detail might be criticised. Mr. Hoover's speech quoted on page 33 was surely made in 1920, not 1921, when he was still a presidential possibility, not when he was about to enter the Harding cabinet? Another point is of greater moment. Dr. Wright is too pessimistic in fearing that there will not be enough critical opposition? The Port of Montreal (whose interests in the matter are not stressed very much in these pages) will be able to look after itself and its rulers will read the gloomy account of the navigation difficulties of Toronto with some gratification. In any case, Mr. Roosevelt will probably need to carry his own State of New York this autumn to be re-elected, and the Port of Albany has begun to remind the President of the United States of the support the late Governor of New York gave to the ambitions of the state capital. With Mr. King in power in Ottawa and Mr. Roosevelt in power in Washington, it will be some time before ocean freighters begin to run aground on the Thousand Islands.

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Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté: Books XI and XII (*Recours à l'Abîme* and *Les Créateurs*). By JULES ROMAINS. Paris: *Flammarion.* 12 *francs* each.

Even now, with twelve volumes of M. Jules Romains' behemoth published in France and ten in England, neither an end nor yet the middle parts can be seen. To the uninitiated this may seem absurd, disheartening, or worse; to the reader who has been caught up in this extraordinary *reportage du temps perdu*, the magnitude of the scale on which M. Romains is working is neither very surprising, nor at all discouraging. He may even rejoice: for in these last two volumes there is no trace of exhaustion in the writing, in the inventiveness, in the author's curiosity and observation; and M. Romains (unless I am misinformed) is still only fifty-one. Every reader of *Men of Good Will* will find his own *longueurs* in these twelve solid inches of reading-matter, and may be forgiven for reading with an eclectic eye. In any case, life itself has different *longueurs* for nearly everybody, and a great part of the art of living is to know how to mitigate, or sometimes to skip, these spells of aridity. So no reader of average sense and sensibility should be deterred from embarking on this journey through a pre-war France simply because it looks a long way, or because there is no final destination yet marked on the milestones.

M. Romains was under few illusions regarding his task when he began to write, still less to publish, his present work. In a preface to the first volume (*The Sixth of October*), which it is highly interesting to re-read after the four years which have passed since it originally appeared, he explains a great deal of the

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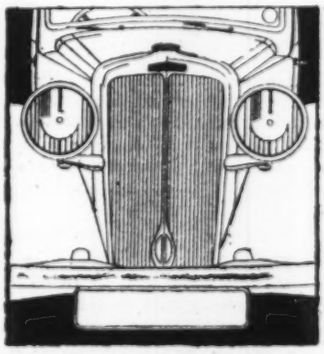

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book's inception and conception; but he refrains from mentioning an exact figure for the number of projected volumes, "in order not to alarm people."

But this matter of size should not dominate our approach to the work. The size is a means, not an end. The long row of volumes is certainly intercommunicating, but not so interdependent that any single part is meaningless without reference to the rest. It is the variety of social and mental background throughout the successive volumes, the constant and consistent sense of humanity, the awareness of how men and women live and behave in relation to their particular part of the social machine, that give the work its significance and its fascination. It is impossible to convey within a reasonable space how wide that variety is. At random, there are Jerphanion and Jallez, the young *Normaliens;* Gurau, the rising politician, ultimately Foreign Minister at the time of one of the great Franco-German crises, and his mistress, Germaine Baader; Wazemmes, the house-painter's apprentice who drifts into the orbit of the ingenious Haverkamp, who exploits building sites and then a medicinal spring; the bookbinder, Quinette, so ineluctably edged into murder; the rising dynasties of oil princes; the charming, elusive Hélène Sigeau; Marie de Champcenais, the good wife roused for the first time to passionate love by the aspiring Roger Sammécaud; Aristide Briand, Albert de Mun, Jean Jaurès, neither more nor less "real" than the characters with whom they come into contact; the English journalist, Stephen Bartlett; Clanricard, the schoolmaster seeking the values of a religion and a church in Freemasonry; that scandalous old maid, Bernardine de St. Papoul; the little boy, Bastide, eking out his stricken family's budget by surreptitiously acting as an errand-boy; the *littérateur* Strigelius; the Abbé Mionnet and his mission to M—— (curiously reminiscent of the novels of Ferdinand Fabre); the "Society" novelist, Allory, his candidature for the Academy, his incompetent amorous adventure. . . . And so on: the arbitrary catalogue might be quadrupled. It cannot show how these lives, apparently so divergent, touch at the given points, nor how those points of contact give the immense book pattern and coherence which become more definite and convincing as one looks back. Nor can it convey the curious sense of certainty with which M. Romains presents pictures of lives and people so varied as that rough-and-ready, fragmentary list may indicate. True, when a strict aesthetic test is applied, M. Romains quite frequently fails, for a page or two at a time, by imposing far more than is justifiable of his own vision and views upon personages who would actually be incapable of exercising or holding or expressing them. But on the whole the book has a degree of verisimilitude, in physical and psychological detail, which it would be hard to match in contemporary fiction.

It is not hard to understand this, perhaps, when one remembers the steady, almost too patient, consistency of M. Romains' work, in fiction, verse, plays—and even scientific research—for fully a quarter of a century. The germ of many elements in *Men of Good Will* may be seen in the admirable *Mort de Quelqu'un*, or in *Puissances de Paris;* many parts have direct links with the triology of novels, *Lucienne*, *Le Dieu des Corps* and *Quand le Navire;* the satiric humour of *Knock* or *M. Le Trouhadec* recurs quite frequently; the student of extra-retinal vision knows well what he is dealing with in the curious episode of Dr. Viaur in the opening sections of *Les Créateurs*. The label of "Unanimism," of course, is often too peremptorily attached to any of M. Romains' work. But the ideas, and indeed the mystical experience underlying that name (an experience which the author has himself told of elsewhere), are paramount in much of the detail and most of the structure of *Men of Good Will*. If a spiritual key is to be sought for the book, it may be found in that form of pantheism to which the rather misleading and question-begging term, Unanimism, was too quickly given. But whatever the key, most readers who push boldly in can hardly fail to find company worth seeking; and they should do so.

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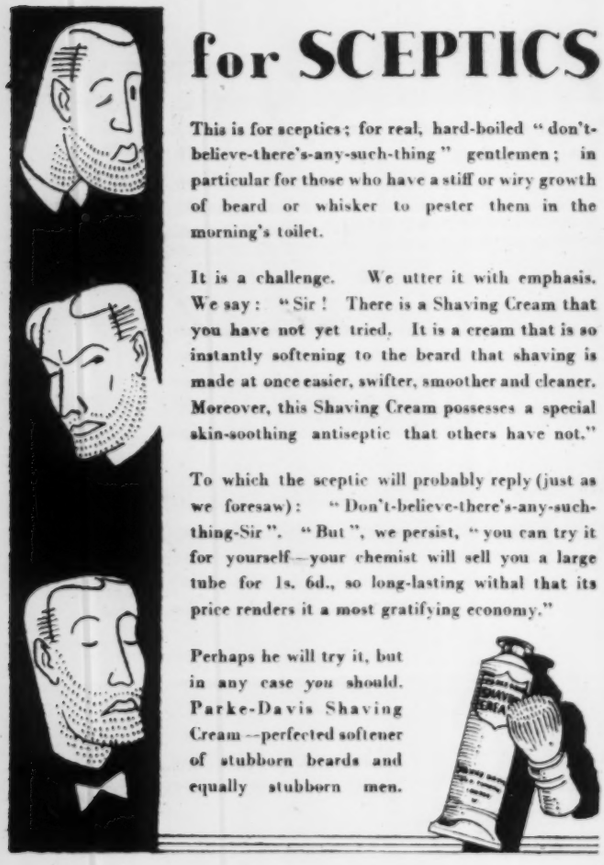
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Economics of Transport. By M. R. BONAVIA. Cambridge Economic Series. *Nisbets.* 5s.

The Decline of Competition. By A. R. BURNS. *McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.* 30s.

Mr. Bonavia's little book is a worthy addition to a deservedly famous series, and will be welcomed by students everywhere; especially, no doubt, by those following an academic course, but hardly less by other readers with a special interest in the subject. There are two ways of tackling the thorny but fascinating subject of transport economics; to start from the theory of imperfect competition and in particular of monopoly, simple or discriminating, and to illustrate theoretical points by reference to concrete examples; or to begin, as Mr. Bonavia does, with a general and largely historical survey of the facts and a subsequent analysis and regrouping of these according to the principles which emerge from their study. There is no doubt which makes the easier and more interesting approach; nor, under Mr. Bonavia's guidance, does the reader risk failing to see the wood for the trees—a very real danger with this method. Where Mr. Bonavia offers an outline map of one section of the economic field, Mr. Burns ambitiously offers a full-size atlas and gazetteer. As he explains in his introduction, his monumental work is an attempt to bridge the gulf between the recent and highly abstract literature of imperfect competition and the mass of material available as to its practical manifestations. It is difficult for an English reader, more familiar with conditions on this side of the Atlantic than with those described by Mr. Burns, to judge how fully his attempt has succeeded; but there is no doubt of the intense interest, to economists, of his book. He has produced a mine of information and of references on the activities of the great American corporations and also of the less publicised Trade Associations, has gone some way to disentangle the genuine social benefits—or otherwise—of large-scale production and control and agreed policy from their merely private advantage, and has supplied several hitherto rather nebulous economic conceptions with content. To English taste there is perhaps rather too much repetitious data-hunting in proportion to the theoretical discussion; and it is to be feared that the great length and high price of *The Decline of Competition* will prevent its circulation among many who would profit by reading it. It is a pity that Mr. Burns could not have wielded the blue pencil more vigorously; perhaps one day we may have an abridged edition for the English market.

Films and Theatre. By ALLARDYCE NICOLL. *Harrap.* 7s. 6d.

Professor Allardyce Nicoll opens this study of the Cinema and the Theatre with a demonstration that precisely what is said of the cinema to-day by those who dislike, despise, and distrust it, was said by the critics of the Elizabethan stage in the years before Shakespeare began to write for it. The moral of this demonstration is double-edged, for, if it is futile to deny a future to any art-form, it is perhaps as futile to foretell one. It may be said at once that the Professor is at his best when he sticks to the analysis of present conditions in the film industry and compares them with those of the past; and it is well that the industry has so vigorous and erudite a champion. The film is very young

Individuality

We were on a country walk and had halted to munch a midday sandwich. Close to our feet we saw a cardboard container labelled " So-and-So's *Individual* Fruit Pie —Gooseberry—Twopence." The maker's name suggested long lines of thousands of pies being mixed, cooked and boxed without the touch of a human hand. In this case the word " individual " apparently meant small individual pies, i.e., not portions of large ones.

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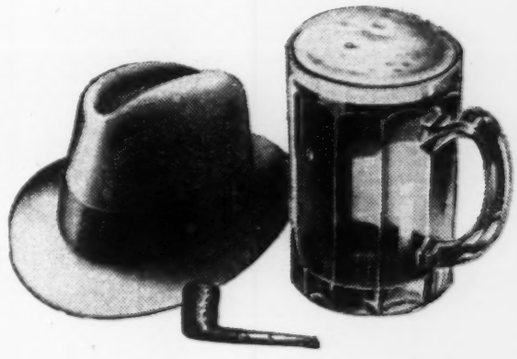

we have good reason to copy

BECAUSE WE KNOW WHY

beer is best

163

and very malleable. Its mechanism and its technique are continually changing and improving. It is very popular, and its millions of supporters are growing critical. They want what they like, but they want it to be the best of its kind, and when the Shakespeare of the screen arrives we have no reason to suppose they will turn him down. For he will come from the studio as Shakespeare came from the stage. No Bacons need apply. As for the theatre, it may be said, as Professor Nicoll says, it must return to poetry and convention and leave realism to the film or fade out. And maybe not. The drama is as old as civilisation and older, it waxes and it wanes and waxes again, and in its emotional relation between performer and audience it has a strength, as the Professor sees, that no mechanism can ever compass.

Week-end Competitions

No. 339

Set by Flora Grierson

"It is significant that titles are in many cases quotations: *Time is Whispering*, *The Crystal Cabinet*, *Antic Hay* . . . Titles suggest much in little; they are at once a label and an enigma."

George Rylands, *Words and Poetry*.

We offer a first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea for six quotations suitable as titles for novels of the six following types:

(1) A modern love-story set in England.
(2) A detective novel.
(3) An American gangster novel.
(4) A psychological novel.
(5) A Communist propaganda novel.
(6) A Fascist propaganda novel.

We suggest that the title should be two, three, or more words from a longer quotation, which will appear on the title-page and indicate the manner of the book. As, for example, Aldous Huxley's *Proper Studies*—"The proper study of Mankind is Man" (Pope).

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, Sept. 18.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

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ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT'

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 337

Set by Sylvia Lynd

Disparagement being one of life's constant pleasures, we offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for disparaging sentences or phrases about any six of the following places: New York, Venice, Florence, Avignon, Granada, the Rhone Valley, the Isle of Mull, the Rocky Mountains, Dublin Bay, Derwentwater, York Minster, Polperro.

Report by Sylvia Lynd

This competition, appealing as it does to the meanest side of human nature, has produced a gratifyingly large response. As often happens, a better entry can be made out of composite entries than can be found in any single one.

Some contributors do not clearly distinguish between disparagement and abuse. Mr. A. H. Godwin reached a high level of abuse—the Rocky Mountains as "the natural home of the skunk," and Derwentwater as "an ideal spot for suicide" are good, but he enlarges and spoils them and his other remarks are too insulting. L. G. Bach invents an amusing short cut with the comment upon all beautiful places: "Pretty, of course, but candidly I prefer Bournemouth," but this really evades the point of the competition, which is to reveal the greatest possible amount of Philistine complacency in the smallest possible space. The following remarks do this, I think, very satisfactorily:

New York: The City of Dreadful Height.
Venice: Smell Venice and die.
Florence: Far, far too many pictures, my dear.
Avignon: A series of corners for the Mistral to blow round.
Granada: They did this sort of thing much better at Earl's Court.
Rhone Valley: As with Rhine, Avon and so on, "Rhone" is just another variation of the generic word for river.
Isle of Mull: One of those "Man of Aran" places.
Rocky Mountains: It must be dull for those unfortunate bears in winter.
Dublin Bay: Well, prawns survive it apparently.
Derwentwater: A magnificent Corporation reservoir.
Polperro: Isn't that the place where artists go to when they're too poor to live anywhere else?
York Minster: Give me York ham.

I like also, "I was *enchanted* by Venice when I was an undergraduate"; "A visit to Polperro reveals the market price of antiquity"; of the Rhone Valley, "Not a patch on the White City scenic railway"; and these of York Minster, Derwentwater and Florence: Of course, if you admire second-rate English Gothic. . . . Just like the postcard view of it. . . . Of course, we never lose more time than we can help getting across Florence. . . . I admire too, these three dry sneers (though I suspect their author of thinking not of York but of Durham):

Avignon, just ten hours from Paris, is deservedly popular with tourists who wish to avoid night-travel.

Poets may see Derwentwater through a mist of sentiment, but for ordinary folk the rain is nearly always willing to oblige.

Most travellers to the North see York Minster, unless they happen to be sitting on the wrong side of the railway carriage.

I propose to pool the prizes on this occasion and divide them among the following competitors:

Miss Dorothy Gray.
Mr. Philip A. Humble.
Mr. Francis Lloyd.
Mr. Robert Gaffikin.
Mr. Michael Noblstow.
Miss Sylvia Townsend Warner.
Miss A. Caldwell.
Mr. A. Tancred.
Miss Olwen Lawton.
Mr. William Bliss.
Mr. R. D. Cribb.
Cornius.
Abroad.
Mr. Harry Broadbent.
Mr. O. W. Barker.
Mr. Leslie Nicholls.

Leaving to others the task of addressing the envelopes, sticking on the stamps and doing the arithmetic.

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 194.—THE FOURTH 'PHONE NUMBER

"Snooper's best piece of work," said Smart, "was when he was rounding up that Anarchist crush—the so-called Seventeenth International. He brought off a very pretty piece of deduction."

"Tell me about it," said I.

"Why," said Smart, "it was like this. The gang—which was working on a scheme for blowing up Woolwich Arsenal—was run by a chap named Zcycz. We called him Sneeze in the force, of course. Well, old Sneeze didn't trust anybody. Result was, if you wanted to know

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The Economic Journal

The Quarterly Journal of the Royal Economic Society

SEPTEMBER, 1936

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The Definition of Prime and Supplementary Costs	S. D. A. MacDougal
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his plans, you had to ring up four different 'phone numbers. Then you got four fragments of a code, or whatnot, and you had to piece 'em together.

"Now Snooper, who had stacks of people working with him, gradually got together some facts about these numbers. One of them, he knew, was Dreadnought 7647. That was told him by Joe, the Red Skunk. A week later he learnt that a second number was Plaistow something-something-one-one. And after about another month's research part of a third number came to light. It was Maryland two-something-something-two.

"There Snooper stuck for weeks, with old Sneeze laughing up his sleeve and getting more and more dangerous. All Snooper could learn about the fourth number was that it was on the Whitechapel Exchange. He brooded and brooded. But one day, after a visit to the Police College, he came back pretty well reeling with excitement. 'Smarty,' he sez, 'I've got that blurry number.'

"And, sure enough, Sneeze was arrested next day, in the British Museum Reading Room. He was disguised as a Methodist minister."

What was the fourth 'phone number?

PROBLEM 192.—ARTHURIAN LEGEND

(By *F. Mortimer Wentworth*)

The possibilities of the contest can be analysed as follows:

	Winners of Successive Jousts.	Corresponding Expectations.
1	A A A	625 in 3024
2	A A E	125 " 3024
3	A D D	25 " 378
4	A D E	25 " 756
5	C C C	3 " 32
6	C C E	1 " 32
7	C D D	1 " 18
8	C D E	1 " 36
9	B B B	128 " 945
10	B B E	32 " 945
11	B D D	32 " 567
12	B D E	16 " 567
13	C C C	3 " 35
14	C C E	1 " 35
15	C D D	16 " 315
16	C D E	8 " 315

Adding these, we find that total expectations are:

A (Sir Lancelot) 18750/90720
B (Sir Bedivere) 12288/90720
C (Sir Gawain) 16281/90720
D (Sir Kay) 20768/90720
E (Sir Geraint) 22633/90720

Now if Sir Lancelot wins, Merlin gains 2,000 boobles; if Sir Bedivere wins, Merlin gains 1,000 boobles; if Sir Kay wins, Merlin loses 1,000 boobles; if Sir Geraint wins, Merlin loses 2,000 boobles. If Sir Gawain wins, Merlin is all square on his book. It follows that Merlin's expectation of loss *is* 179 89/1134 boobles.

NOTE.—The expression "How much does Merlin stand to gain or lose?" can here only refer to mathematical expectation. 179 odd boobles is the price Merlin would have to pay to "lay off" his bad book.

Correct solutions (to date), 53; incorrect, 16.

Some comments:

"A pleasant problem for a rainy day."

"One of the trickiest yet set."

"Has bookmaking practice improved so much since Arthur's day?"

PROBLEM 191.—DEATH BY THE DIE

A set of Low's cartoons goes to: Miss M. L. Hutchinson, 184 Bristol Road, Birmingham.

Eight points are awarded.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10s. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

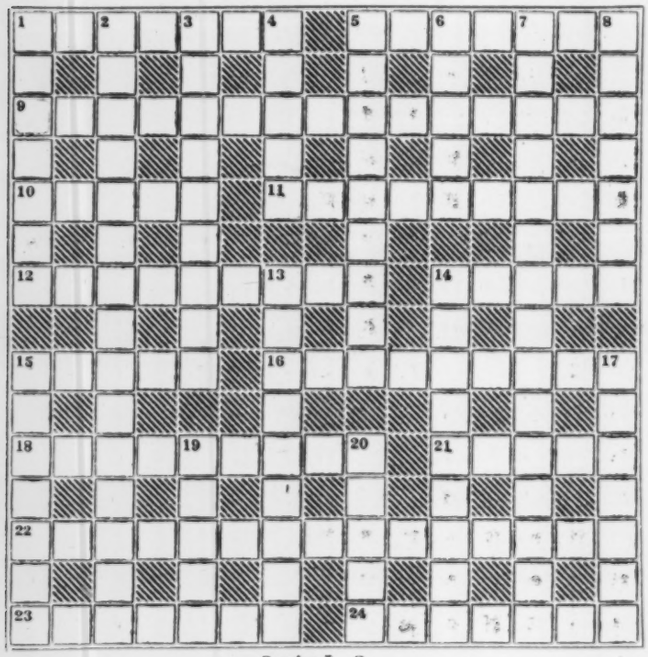
Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 340

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday. Prize-winners should address their claims to the Editor.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Mr. R. P. Williamson, 103 Fotheringay Road, Glasgow, S.1.

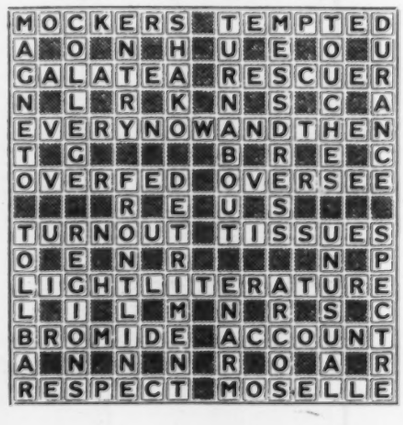
ACROSS

1. Did it make Caesar cross?
5. The elephant's instrument.
9. Are they illegally married?
10. Operatic turn from the coast.
11. A hardly believable person.
12. One is neutral when one is in it.
14. Sweets which even the wise might gladly suffer.
15. Foolish for a Scot to do it in one.
16. Sang out.
18. Perfect ingredients.
21. Their brothers or sisters are not childless.
22. Suggests good movements for A.D. 1936.
23. Refuge from a waterfall for instance.
24. The Boers did it greatly.

DOWN

1. Not an imperial pint.
2. Houris perhaps.
3. Nice legs a native of Ceylon has.
4. Are bounded by north and south.
5. The street winds round the edge.
6. Presence acknowledged perhaps, yet with a suggestion of a stony look all the same.
7. Alternative name for Shakespearean tragedy.
8. Tillers might do such work.
13. All comers to this seat find it armed.
14. Victorian ladies could easily have indulged in such tomfoolery in hot weather.
15. A forceful driver.
17. Come down rather than downfall.
19. Meeting that may lead to an engagement.
20. Part of tree for fire.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD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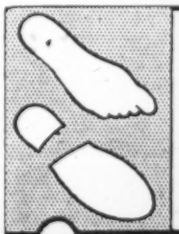

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

THE GOLD SUPPLY AND THE RATE OF INTEREST—THE BOOM IN EQUITY SHARES—MEXICAN EAGLE—WOOLWORTH AND MARKS AND SPENCER

"THE Muse of History," writes Mr. J. M. Keynes in the September *Economic Journal*, "is ironically disposed. Communist efficiency in the extraction of gold may serve to sustain yet awhile the capitalist system." He was reviewing the supply of gold and was arguing that in the long run the abundant supplies of gold, present and prospective, were bound to exert a great influence in keeping rates of interest down. An abundance of gold means that the most important obstacle, in the eyes of orthodox bankers, in the way of maintaining cheap money is greatly diminished. "But the full effect of this influence," Mr. Keynes points out, "is much delayed partly by the postponement of the devaluation of the gold bloc . . . and partly by the inequality in the distribution of the gold." But looking ahead, "if, after the devaluation of the gold bloc, private hoards were to be dispersed, and if, in due course, Europe were to cash in its profits (or losses) in Wall Street in sufficient volume to cause a substantial outflow of gold from the United States, there might ensue an effect on the rate of interest throughout the world of an order of magnitude quite different from anything hitherto experienced. It is quite conceivable," he adds, "that as much as £500 millions might be added in a single year, and an equal sum in the year following, to the reserves of Central Banks outside the United States."

* * *

This, I think, is looking very far ahead. The devaluation of the gold bloc may happen at any time—with or without the fall of M. Blum—but as political security in Europe is not likely to be increased thereby, the dispersion of private gold hoards will not immediately follow. And however badly Wall Street may be affected in the short run by the Presidential election, most investors consider that the long-term trend of American equity stocks is still upward and will be in no hurry to leave a market which is comparatively immune from the risks of a European war. But the main point is that an abundant supply of gold makes for cheap money and that "one Government after another," as Mr. Keynes says, "is becoming convinced as to the importance of cheap money . . . whether we are most interested in curing unemployment or in financing rearmament." The British Government, for example, has increased the gold stock of the Bank of England over the past twelve months by £52 millions (old parity), or £84 millions (new parity), and appears to be prepared to go on increasing the monetary supply of gold until the banks are forced to add to their investments, that is, until the long-term rate of interest is forced down. No doubt it is anxious to prepare the market for the issue of a defence loan at a preposterously low rate of interest. The only trouble that lies in a further cheapening of money in this country is that a dangerous boom may develop in security prices. Ordinary shares will rise still further if gilt-edged prices give the lead and, even to-day, certain equity shares appear dangerously inflated. The securities index of the *Investors' Chronicle* has reached a new high record since the 1928 boom. The story of eight years—boom, slump and boom—is told in the following table:

Base: 100 = Dec. 31st, 1923 Ordinary Stock Prices.	Boom. Apr. 30th, 1928.	Slump. May 31st, 1932.	Boom. Aug. 28th, 1936.
Brewery	193.3	115.8	318.9
Chemicals	213.5	68.5	188.1
Coal	76.5	33.5	68.4
Gas, Light, Electricity	168.1	155.9	203.6
Iron and Steel	77.6	22.3	65.7
Rails	89.8	36.1	70.1
Shipping	130.5	23.2	37.3
Miscellaneous	203.0	82.8	291.5
Index all securities	136.1	68.6	129.4

I do not suggest that the peak has yet been reached in ordinary share prices. By April, 1937, I would expect to see the index still higher, if there is no war. But I think the authorities should be alive to the possibility of the boom in equity shares exceeding the bounds of decency.

* * *

Sir John Cadman, speaking at the World Power Conference in Washington, warned his public that according to the present estimates of geologists the world's oil supply would last only another twenty years. Unfortunately, it is not possible to buy oil shares twenty years forward and, as I argued here recently, the autumnal prospect before the American oil industry is a temporary over-supply of gasoline. A boom in oil shares would, therefore, be silly at the present time. In discussing oil investments last week, I did not include Mexican Eagle, which were recommended on April 25th at 20*s.* 6*d.* cum dividend and are now quoted at 28*s.* 9*d.* ex dividend. Mexican Eagle is not an investment but a gamble, but as its output of crude oil this year is 30 per cent. above that of 1935, it is a good gamble. Last year a dividend of 10*d.* gross per share was paid, but as the profits were presumably shown after deduction of the amounts paid in settlement of the Amatlan lawsuit and the sundry difficulties with the Mexican Government, the real earnings were substantially in excess of the dividend. It is dangerous to speculate upon Mexican Eagle, but I am inclined to expect double the dividend this year. It must be remembered, however, that Mexican Eagle is an international market. Recently a friend of mine was staying at a French hotel and talked until the early hours of the morning with a French business man who was loud in his praises of M. Blum. Finally, the Frenchman raised his glass and proposed a toast. My friend expected the name of Stalin or Lenin, but, to his astonishment, the Frenchman said "Let us now drink to Mexican Eagle. Without them I and my family would be miserable and poor."

* * *

To show that a pure mathematician has no feelings, my Statistical Assistant sends me a note to say that at present market prices he is beginning to prefer Marks and Spencer to Woolworth. In previous comparisons his preference was the reverse. In February, 1935, when these two ordinary shares were first compared, Woolworth was 110*s.* and Marks and Spencer "A" 100*s.* In May, 1936, Woolworth was 129*s.* 6*d.* and Marks and Spencer "A" 103*s.* 6*d.* cum the 10 per cent. capital bonus. We then still preferred Woolworth—much to the annoyance of one reader—and our choice has been justified by the subsequent rise of Woolworth to 147*s.* 6*d.* (on bonus expectations) and fall in Marks and Spencer "A" to 89*s.* ex bonus (or 107*s.* 6*d.* cum the 1935 and 1936 capital bonuses). My Statistical Assistant considers that both shares are intrinsically dear at present prices but that Marks and Spencer is perhaps the cheaper relatively of the two. In May last he was arguing that the profits for any year depended on the number of stores open at the beginning of the year, and estimated the earnings for the current year with some confidence. Here is the table brought up to date:

	Present Price.	1935 Dividend.	1935 Yield %.	1935 Earnings.	1935 Yield %.	Estimated, 1936 Earnings.	Estimated, 1936 Yield %.
Woolworth Ord. Shares, 5/- ..	147/6	100%	£3 8	133%	£4 10	141%	£4 15
Marks and Spencer "A" Shares 5/-	89/-	40%	£2 5*	73%	£4 2	81%	£4 11

*Exclusive of 10% capital bonus.

Although the earnings yield is slightly higher for Woolworth, it must be remembered that the profits of Marks and Spencer seem to be rising in geometrical progression and those of Woolworth in arithmetical progression. This cannot go on indefinitely, as we have argued before, but for the time being Marks and Spencer appear to be the cheaper share, even if Woolworth does declare a grand capital bonus. But to show how dear both shares are intrinsically at present market prices, my Statistical Assistant adds the following table:

	Present Market Capitalisation per Store.*	Last Profits per Store.†	Profit Yield.	Stores Valued at
Woolworth ..	£186,000	£8,800	4.73%	21 years' purchase of profits
Marks and Spencer	£161,000	£6,700	4.16%	24 " "

* Number of stores open at beginning of current year.

† Profit for last reported year.

Seeing that my Statistical Assistant has now committed himself to the Marks and Spencerian cause, I shall not be surprised to see a large bonus declared by Woolworth. As long as the national income goes on increasing investors are naturally loath to sell multiple store shares, of which Woolworth is the king.

Company Meeting

ISMAY INDUSTRIES

PROSPEROUS AND EXPANDING BUSINESS

MR. JOHN ISMAY'S ADDRESS

THE first ordinary general meeting of Ismay Industries, Ltd., was held on Thursday, September 3rd, at Southern House, London, E.C.

Mr. John Ismay (chairman and managing director) said that they were a holding company, roughly half their capital being invested in the electric lamp trade and associated businesses, and the other half in a number of different enterprises. In the lighting trade they were well established and had nothing to fear, their trade progressing steadily in both domestic and speciality lamps.

Their investments in associated companies represented holdings and interests in about fifteen different companies, the principal of which was the Sterling Works, Dagenham, an estate of about twenty acres containing a number of entirely separate freehold factories. One of these works manufactured Halcyon Radio sets, Electrix electric sweepers, and electric clocks. Their radio sets were now so good that they were selling them on a two years' guarantee of full replacement of all parts, which had never been done in the radio trade before. They had disposed of the whole of the output budgeted for. The sweeper business was progressing favourably, and they had overcome the initial difficulties with regard to electric clocks.

The summer had been an unfavourable one for refrigerators, but they had, nevertheless, sold 3,000 Zeros refrigerators, which gave an idea of what could be done in a favourable year. The Kniveton Cable Company was progressing in its manufacture of flex and small cables. They had just completed a new factory at Dagenham for batteries, and they were going ahead with their factory for Paper Cables. Outside Dagenham their most interesting proposition was the works at Eccles, Manchester, for impregnating cardboard for food with damp-resisting material. Their latest proposition was a German one, the Dirks Dry Proofer.

Half their money was invested to bring them in a steady return sufficient to pay the Preference dividend and 8 per cent. or 9 per cent. on the Ordinary shares, and in years to come the other half would probably bring them in a bigger revenue, but that would take time.

The report was unanimously adopted.

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CVS—253

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CVS—16

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DUCHESS. Spring Tide. Wed. & Sat.

GARRICK. Storm in a Teacup. Wed., Thurs.

GLOBE. "Call It a Day." Wed. & Thurs.

LYRIC. "Farewell Performance." Th., Sat.

PLAYHOUSE. Whiteoaks. Wed., Th., Sat.

ST. JAMES'. 'Pride & Prejudice.' W., Th., S.

ST. MARTIN'S. Heroes Don't Care. Tu., Fri.

SAVOY. Lady Precious Stream. M., Th., S.

STRAND. Aren't Men Beasts! Wed., Thurs.

WHITEHALL. Anthony & Anna. W. & S.

THEATRES

ALDWYCH. Evgs., 8.30. Tu., W., 2.30. Tem. 6404.
MARY CLARE in
AFTER OCTOBER.
By RODNEY ACKLAND.

APOLLO. (Gerrard 2663.) 8.30. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
THE FUGITIVES, by Walter Hackett.
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Mats., WEDS. and THURS., 2.30.
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The Jane Austen Novel dramatised by Helen Jerome.

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The First Term in the Faculty of Laws will begin on MONDAY, 5th OCTOBER, 1936
Day and Evening Courses will be held at University College, King's College, and the London School of Economics. The Faculty of Laws has been recognised as a "Law School" under the Solicitors Act, 1932. The handbook containing a list of Professors and Teachers, particulars of arrangements for admission, Scholarships and Prizes, Courses, etc., may be obtained on application to the SECRETARY of University College, or of King's College, or of the London School of Economics.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
UNIVERSITY AND BEDFORD COLLEGES
Session 1936–37
DEPARTMENT OF DUTCH HISTORY AND INSTITUTIONS.
Reader: G. J. RENIER, Ph.D., Phil.Lit.Cand.
Courses in Dutch History and Institutions will begin in October.
DEPARTMENT OF DUTCH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.
Lecturer: THEODOOR WEEVERS, D.Litt.
Junior and Senior Courses in Grammar, Translation and Composition, and Courses in Modern and Mediaeval Dutch Literature will begin on Friday, 9th October, at Bedford College.
Evening Courses in Dutch will be held at University College. Junior Course on Mondays at 5 p.m. Senior Course on Mondays at 6 p.m. For full particulars of Courses and Public Lectures on Dutch subjects, application should be made to:—
C. O. G. DOUIE, Secretary,
University College, London, W.C.1,
or to MISS O. E. MONKHOUSE, Secretary,
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